

NDAY, MARCH 21
COLUMBIA
Mandela gets peace award

Abbas undecided on return to talks

BEIRUT (AFP) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) official Mahmoud Abbas, an architect of the self-rule deal with Israel, said Monday he was undecided on whether to head a new committee monitoring the autonomy talks. "The PLO Executive Committee and the Fatah central committee have asked me to resume my post as head of the monitoring committee. But so far I have not accepted," he told the London-based Arabic daily Al Hayat. "This issue has to be examined more closely. We have to define the policies, goals and methods of negotiations. This examination has not taken place in a detailed manner," he told the newspaper. Mr. Abbas signed for the PLO the 1993 declaration of principles on autonomy with Israel. He used to chair the committee monitoring the bilateral talks in Washington. But he later joined critics of the negotiations with Israel and has remained in Tunis since the self-rule authority was set up in Gaza last May, refusing to join PLO leader Yasser Arafat's cabinet.

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King visits Hammad family

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Monday visited the residence of the Hammad family to personally condole them on the death of Jumm'a Hammad, a former minister of culture and member of the Upper House of Parliament. His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan delegated his private advisor Mohammad Al Saqaf to condole Al Tarabeen tribes over the death of Mr. Hammad.

King, Mubarak exchange views

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Monday telephoned Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and exchanged with him views on issues of common interest to Jordan and Egypt. King Hussein thanked Mr. Mubarak on the hospitality Egypt accorded to Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and the delegation accompanying him on his visit to Egypt on Thursday and Friday to participate in the meetings of the Jordanian-Egyptian Higher Committee.

King orders free treatment to Iraqi

AMMAN (AP) — Leading Iraqi sociologist Ali Al Wardi has been admitted to a Jordanian military hospital after King Hussein ordered free medical treatment for him, doctors said Monday. They said Mr. Wardi, 82, was suffering from prostate trouble. He is expected to remain at the King Hussein Medical Centre for some time, they said. Mr. Wardi is well-known in the Arab World for his writings on sociology and has written more than 30 books.

King visits PM

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Monday evening visited the Prime Minister and met with Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker. King Hussein discussed with Sharif Zeid several issues and issued directives.

Clinton to visit Russia, Ukraine

WASHINGTON (AFP) — President Bill Clinton will visit Russia in May to attend commemorative events for the 50th anniversary of the Allied victory in Europe. White House spokesman Michael McCurry said Monday. "President Clinton will travel to Russia and Ukraine May 9 to 11," Mr. McCurry said. Mr. Clinton would meet with Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma, Mr. McCurry said.

Major to visit U.S. in April

WASHINGTON (AFP) — British Prime Minister John Major will pay a working visit to Washington in early April, White House spokesman Michael McCurry said Monday. "At the invitation of President (Bill) Clinton, British Prime Minister John Major will make an official working visit to Washington April 3 and 4," Mr. McCurry said. The two "look forward in discussions on a wide range of issues," Mr. McCurry said. News of the visit came after tension between the two countries over last week's visit to Washington by Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams.

Balladur pitches for Jewish vote

PARIS (R) — Prime Minister and presidential candidate Edouard Balladur, in a clear bid for Jewish votes, was quoted on Monday as saying Franco-Israeli ties were the best in 25 years and protection for Jewish sites had never been better. "Never in the past 25 years have ties between France and Israel been better," Mr. Balladur was quoted as telling the Jewish weekly Tribune Juive.

Israel studies 'separation' with urgency after attack

Army blames Hamas for ambush, keeps Hebron under tight curfew

HEBRON, occupied West Bank (Agencies) — The Israeli army blamed the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, on Monday for an ambush on a packed bus in the occupied West Bank which killed two Israeli settlers and wounded five others.

As soldiers enforced the curfew, 2,000 Jewish settlers hurried the two killed in the ambush while the Palestinians stayed indoors. Settlers from throughout the occupied West Bank fought back their anger at the attack and listened in silence to the funeral service outside Hebron's Al Ibrahim Mosque.

Only a handful of participants shouted "revenge" for Sunday's machine-gun attack on a bus travelling from Jerusalem to the settlement of Kiryat Arba, which also wounded five settlers. Hundreds of police and soldiers lined the Hebron streets which were empty of Palestinians after the army clamped a curfew on the town.

The victims, Nahum Mass, 31, and 40-year-old Yehuda Partosh both lived near Hebron, where tension between Palestinians and settlers erupted in the massacre of at least 30 Muslim worshippers by a Kiryat Arba settler at

the Ibrahim Mosque in Feb. last year.

One of the victims worked with Rabbi Moshe Levinger, founder of the ultra-nationalist religious movement Gush Emunim and a figurehead for extremist settlers.

The military wing of Hamas, Izzedin Al Qassam, claimed the attack in slogans scrawled on the walls of Bethlehem University.

"Qassam's bullets will blaze until the total liberation of Palestine," one slogan read. Another said: "There is no other language than that of arms."

The attack — the bloodiest against West Bank settlers this year — was carried out by three or four Palestinians who sprayed the bus with machine-gun fire from a rooftop at a crossroads on the Jerusalem-Kiryat Arba road.

An Israeli army colonel said the same commando unit had killed a rabbi from the Otzlet settlement near Hebron in November and was responsible for a string of other attacks in the area in recent months.

"We are going to brick up the house where the shots came from," the officer said.

U.S. Vice-President Al Gore, on a visit to Cairo, condemned the "heinous attack by the enemies of

peace." The Palestinian Authority said late Sunday it condemned all attacks on civilians wherever they came from, but called on Israel to implement the autonomy accords as the only way to stop the violence.

"As a general rule we condemn all attacks on civilians whether they are Israelis or Palestinians or others," Palestinian Housing Minister Zakaria Al Agha told journalists.

Mr. Agha said that the only way to end the violence was for Israel to "implement the accords" signed with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and withdraw its soldiers and settlers from Palestinian areas.

He was speaking after a meeting of the self-rule authority in Gaza with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat back from a trip to Tunis for talks with the PLO's Executive Committee at which it was decided to press on with the autonomy negotiations with Israel.

Settler leaders demanded that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin stop the peace talks with the PLO and complained that the government did little to protect them.

But cabinet ministers said

(Continued on page 7)

Assad says only 'balanced' peace will last in Mideast

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — President Hafez Al Assad reiterated Monday that no peace settlement in the Middle East will last if "it is not balanced, just and comprehensive."

He made the comment during a meeting with the prime minister of the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia, Johannes Rau, who is also chairman of the German Bundestag (senate). "Syria's position towards the peace process is clear: peace cannot be lasting if it is not balanced, just and comprehensive," Mr. Assad was quoted as saying by the official Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA).

It said the talks dealt with the situation in the region and Europe's role in the Middle East peace process.

In Washington, Israel and Syria appeared to be resuming peace talks Monday after a

three-month break, with a focus on security issues involved in an eventual Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

But an Israeli diplomat told AFP that the ambassadors of both countries in Washington, Itamar Rabinovich of Israel and Walid Moallem of Syria, were to meet here Monday and Tuesday. The source declined to elaborate.

The resumption of talks was not officially confirmed. The United States' special coordinator on the Middle East, Dennis Ross, was expected to participate in the negotiations.

Israeli-Syrian negotiations have been deadlocked for more than three years on the question of Israel's withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

Syria has demanded a total withdrawal while Israel has proposed a limited retreat for

a three-year test period.

The resumption of direct talks between the two countries is seen as the fruit of Secretary of State Warren Christopher's latest Mideast mission, last week.

A senior State Department official travelling with Mr. Christopher raised the possibility of discussions that would focus on security guarantees, such as demilitarised zones and military information exchanges, and temporarily put aside the issue of the extent of any Israeli withdrawal.

The Syrian state newspaper Tishrin on Sunday reiterated Syria's insistence that discussions on security measures only would follow Israel's eventual agreement to a total withdrawal and peace.

Mr. Ran told SANA ear-

(Continued on page 7)

Israel seen to reimpose siege on Lebanese fishing

TYRE, Lebanon (Agencies) — Israeli gunboats fired in the direction of Lebanese fishing boats off Tyre on Monday and fishermen said Israel had reimposed a blockade on the South Lebanon port.

Meanwhile, guerrillas ambushed an Israeli patrol in South Lebanon with rocket-propelled grenades and machinegun fire, wounding two soldiers, security sources reported.

The sources said the casualties were flown by helicopter to a hospital in northern Israel.

They said the Israeli patrol of two armoured personnel carriers and about 20 infantrymen came under fire as it moved along a road in an Israeli-occupied border strip near the Crusader-built Beaufort Castle.

Hizbollah, which spearheads a guerrilla war to drive the Israelis out of the occupied strip, said its fighters carried out the attack and claimed several Israelis were

killed or wounded.

The Israeli patrol and allied militiamen of the South Lebanon Army (SLA) returned fire, and four helicopter gunships strafed suspected guerrilla hideouts and infiltration routes with machinegun fire, the security sources said.

It was not known if any of the attackers was hit, the sources reported.

In Tyre, security sources quoted fishermen in a flotilla of 20 boats as saying gunboats fired at them from about two kilometres away when they tried to sail more than one kilometre from Tyre.

An Israeli army spokesman had no comment.

"This abominable blockade which forbids fishermen from making their living is returning again to paint grief on the faces of the fishermen," Mr. Mohammad Bawwah, head of the Tyre fishermen's syndicate, told a news conference.

About 1,500 of South

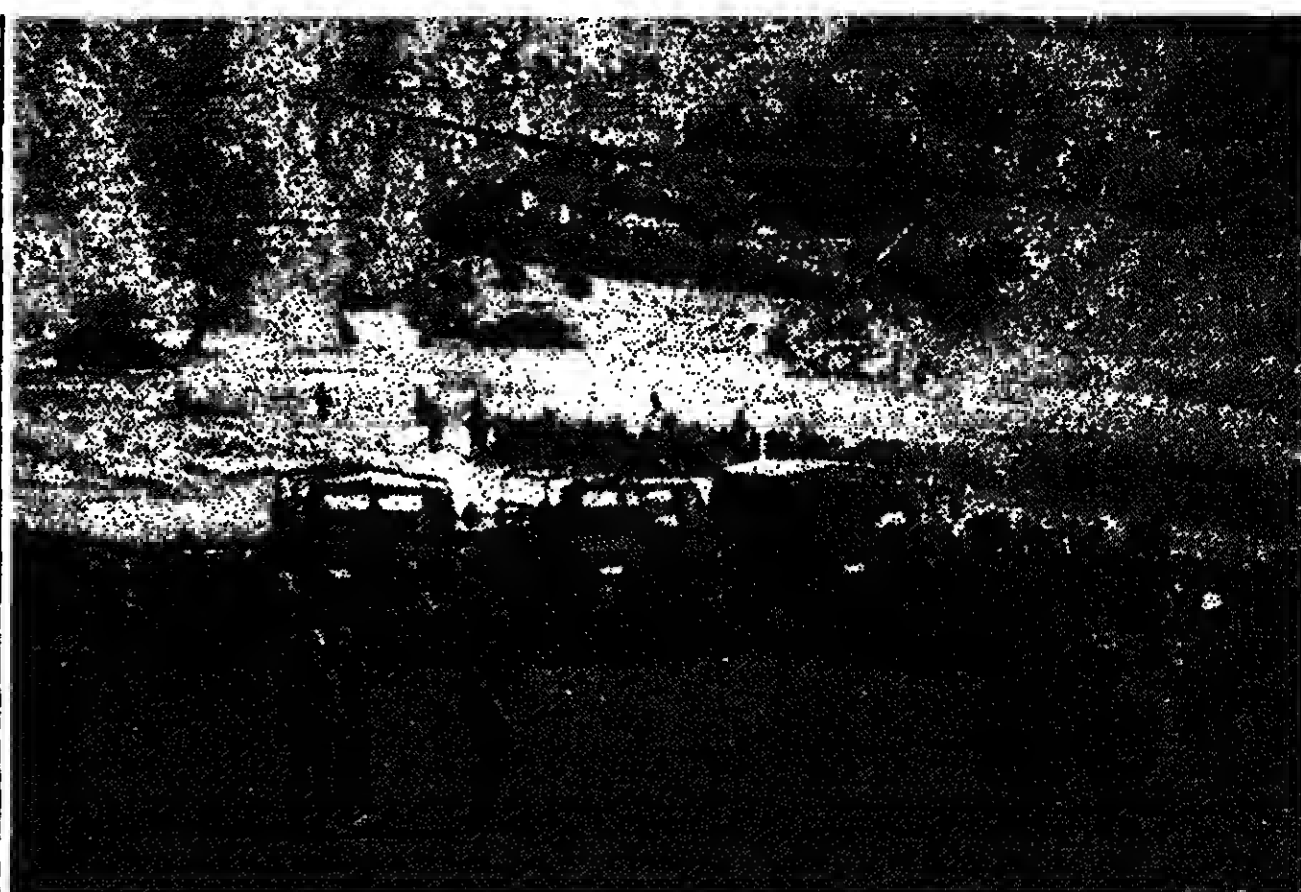
Lebanon's 1,800 fishermen, who ply their trade in small wooden boats, are based in Tyre and are virtually rendered idle by the blockade.

U.N. spokesman Timur Goksel, who is based in Tyre, confirmed the Israeli navy fired about 100 machinegun rounds offshore early on Monday. "But we could not identify the target as our men only heard the shooting they did not see it," he said.

Israel lifted the original blockade, which barred the impoverished fishermen from fishing at night or sailing out more than one kilometre during the day, on March 10 as U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher toured the Middle East.

The blockade on Tyre first began on Feb. 8 and was later extended north to Sidon and Damour, covering the southern half of Lebanon's 200-kilometre coast. Israel's aim was to force Beirut to ease checks on travellers to and

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Thousands of Turkish troops gather at the Turkish-Iraqi border close to northern Iraq to prepare for a launch of a huge military operation against camps set up by the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) on Monday (AFP photo)

Turkish forces push into N. Iraq

ANKARA (Agencies) — Thousands of Turkish troops, backed by tanks and artillery units, poured across the Iraqi border at three points on Monday to attack Kurdish guerrilla bases, military officials said.

An Iraqi opposition group said the Turkish army bombarded villages around the Iraqi town of Zakho, 12 kilometres inside the border. There was no immediate word on casualties.

The troops, totalling up to 35,000, planned to push 40 kilometres into Iraq along a 220 kilometres front to attack more than 2,000 Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) rebels, Colonel Hasan Ongun told a news briefing in Ankara.

Turkey's cabinet went into an emergency meeting on Monday afternoon to discuss the incursion.

The drive against the PKK, fighting for an independent state in southeast Turkey, was mounted on the eve of the Nowruz Kurdish new year, a traditional time of separatist protest.

On Saturday, the PKK ambushed a 40-vehicle military convoy carrying 800 troops in eastern Turkey, killing 18 soldiers and challenging government assertions that the rebels were all but finished.

The PKK, due to lack of authority in northern Iraq, has intensified its activities against Turkey from this region, Prime Minister Tansu Ciller said in a statement.

She said the operation would be of limited duration and would end when the PKK camps were destroyed.

Most of northern Iraq is under the control of Iraqi Kurdish guerrillas who split from Baghdad after the Gulf war in 1991. They are protected by Western air cover.

The Iraqi National Congress (INC) opposition group said in a statement that the Turkish army bombarded villages near Zakho and detained hundreds of suspected PKK members in a refugee camp in the same area.

Iraqi Kurds on Monday condemned the incursion as a violation of their safe haven in the region and of the country's sovereignty.

"This unjustified incursion is taking place at the heart of the security zone established by the coalition force to protect Kurds from renewed Iraqi attacks," said the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP). "It is a clear-cut violation of Iraq's territorial integrity," a KDP statement said.

Ankara said it gave details

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Gore visits Jordan today

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — U.S. Vice-President Al Gore arrives here today in his first visit to Jordan where he is expected to reaffirm the Clinton administration's commitment to the Middle East peace process in general and to supporting Jordan in particular.

His Majesty King Hussein will hold talks with Mr. Gore at the Royal Palace and the King and the U.S. vice-president will address a press conference after the talks.

Mr. Gore, who is accompanied by his wife and senior aides, will be the guest of honour at a dinner hosted by the King and Her Majesty Queen Noor after the press conference at the Royal Palace.

Shortly after his arrival at Marka airport, Mr. Gore will deliver a speech at the Royal Cultural Centre on the U.S. role in the peace process launched in Madrid in October 1991 and Washington's vision of the Middle East's future in a state of peace and stability. He is expected to reaffirm the role of the private sector as the key to economic development of the region.

The vice-president's visit to the Middle East on a trip that includes Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Israel, is described as a reaffirmation of the Clinton administration's resolve to advance the Arab-Israeli peace process and assure the region's leaders that Washington would do everything possible to bring it to fruition.

Jordanian officials say Mr. Gore's visit, which comes a few days ahead of a visit to the U.S. by the King, could prepare the ground for detailed discussions between the King and President Bill Clinton in Washington on March 27.

Mr. Gore, a career politician and long-time member of Congress, is known to be a close advisor to President Clinton and his opinions and

advice are considered of high value by the administration.

The main theme for Mr. Gore's talks here will be the developments in the Jordanian-Israeli track after the two countries signed a peace treaty on Oct. 26 and American pledges of assistance to the Kingdom.

The Clinton administration has adopted moves in Congress to fulfil its pledge to write off all of Jordan's official debts to the U.S. after suffering a minor defeat when the House of Representatives slashed to \$50 million an administration request for \$275 million to cancel up to \$488 million of the Kingdom's obligations.

President Clinton visited Jordan on Oct. 26 to attend the signing of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty in Wadi Araba. He also addressed the Jordanian Parliament where he said Washington was committed to meeting Jordan's economic and security needs.

King Hussein said after meeting U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher here last week that he would raise the issue of American aid to Jordan when he meets President Clinton in Washington.

In between his speech at the RCC and talks with King Hussein, Vice-President Gore will also visit the American embassy here to meet with Americans living in Jordan.

Mr. Gore will arrive here from Egypt, where he arrived Sunday. The vice-president will head for Saudi Arabia tomorrow. From Saudi Arabia he will proceed to Oman and then to Israel.

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Jordan rejects Israeli charges, says it can allow in only 900 Israelis a day

By P.V. Vivekanand Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan on Monday rejected as unfounded Israeli charges that the Kingdom was delaying the issuance of entry permits to Israelis and said a problem of Israelis being turned back at a crossing point last week was the result of misuse of the date specified on the permits by tour operators.

Minister of Tourism Abdul Ilah Khatib also said the best way to solve the problem of clogged tourism traffic from Israel was for Israelis to "spread their visits throughout the week rather than everybody converging on the crossings on Thursdays."

According to the minister, the average number of Israelis visiting Jordan is about 500 per day, except on Thursdays, when it rises dramatically with Israelis seeking to spend the weekend in the Kingdom.

Under an arrangement between Jordan and Israel, 600 Israelis are allowed in across the northern bridge and 300 across the Wadi Araba crossing every day.

Any increase in the number would lead to high press-



Abdul Ilah Khatib

ure on the facilities available in Jordan, the minister pointed out.

Mr. Khatib said the Ministry of Interior was issuing visas on the same day most applications were received from tour operators.

"At worst, in certain cases, the process takes three days," Mr. Khatib told the Jordan Times. "As such, the (Israeli demand) that Jordan speed up the entry-visa situation is unfounded."

The minister was commenting on a "threat" reportedly issued by four Israeli tour operators and the Israeli

Travel Agents Association after an "emergency" meeting on Monday that they would boycott Jordan as a tourism destination if their demand was not met.

The Jerusalem Post, which reported Sunday's "threat," did not mention the daily quota arrangement agreed between Jordan and Israel. It quoted Moshe Hananel, manager of Galilee Tours, as saying that Jordan had "to deal with Israeli tourists like they do with tourists from other countries."

It also quoted Mr. Hananel as saying that despite Thursday's incident, when some tourists had to wait for hours before being allowed in or being turned back because of improprieties in their entry visas, there had been no drop in demand for tours to Jordan.

However, he said, if the tour operators "see no improvement" in the next 10 days, they would suspend all tours to Jordan.

The problem arose on Thursday when more than 1,000 Israeli tourists were turned back at the peace bridge in the north after the

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Decisive Kabul battle likely to delay U.N. peace plan

KABUL (AP) — Now that his forces have taken control of Kabul and its suburbs for the first time since 1992, Afghanistan's president is likely to ignore a U.N. deadline for him to step down Tuesday.

The United Nations peace plan calls for President Burhanuddin Rabbani to hand over power to a multi-party governing council that is open to Afghanistan's 10 separate Islamic factions.

But Mr. Rabbani, whose term expired in December, has said he would not be bound by the U.N. timetable. With the latest military victory, he is now in his strongest position since he came to power in December 1992, and many people expect him to stay in power.

On Sunday, Mr. Rabbani's army scored its biggest victory in the three-year-old civil war. It attacked before dawn and drove the rival Taliban militia from its main base just south of Kabul.

All opposition groups are now too far from the Afghan capital to wage sustained rocket attacks, and the beleaguered residents of Kabul are likely to enjoy relative calm for the first time in a long time if the government can hold its territorial gains.

More importantly, the Taliban appeared to have collapsed Sunday as quickly and dramatically as they had emerged.

In recent months, the group — mostly made up of militant religious students — had captured 10 provinces in

the south and east of Afghanistan and arrived on Kabul's outskirts in February.

However, they had met little resistance until they came up against the president's troops. And Sunday's fighting made it appear that their strength had been overestimated.

"Now they are out of rocket range for Kabul. This was our initial objective," Abdullah, a spokesman for the Defence Ministry who uses only one name, said Sunday.

Government troops began pounding Taliban positions at around 4 a.m. with mortars, heavy artillery, tanks and machine-gun fire.

An hour after the barrage began, the Taliban soldiers fled their base in Charasyab, 25 kilometres south of Kabul, according to the Defence Ministry. The government forces also took strategic hills in the area that have been used by various opposition groups to fire rockets on Kabul.

About 150 Taliban soldiers were killed in Sunday's fighting, said Abdul Hudood, an assistant to the government's top military commander, Ahmad Shah Masoud. Radio Kabul confirmed that death toll Monday and also reported that 200 Taliban were taken captive by the government forces.

Within hours of the Taliban defeat, hundreds of fresh government troops were travelling in trucks down the dusty road from Kabul to Charasyab to reinforce the newly captured positions.

"Where are the Taliban now?" shouted the soldiers, waving their AK-47 assault rifles over their heads.

At least 15 empty flatbed trucks came to Charasyab and were loaded with artillery guns and ammunition stockpiles left behind by the fleeing Taliban. At a front-line post where heavy fighting took place before sunrise, spent cartridges littered the ground.

The Taliban appeared to be retreating Sunday to Pul-e-Alam, 60 kilometres south of the capital.

The government army, meanwhile, was moving tanks toward Maidan Shahr, another Taliban stronghold 30 kilometres to the southwest of Kabul, witnesses said.

While Mr. Rabbani's nominal government can claim full control of Kabul, opposition groups still hold more than 20 of the country's 30 provinces, and it will be much more difficult for the president's troops to capture outlying areas.

His forces have consistently had the upper hand in fighting over the past two weeks that's left more than 1,000 wounded, according to hospitals. Hundreds were believed killed.

Afghanistan's Islamic factions fought as a loose alliance for 13 years before ousting a communist government in April 1992. They then turned their guns on each other in a brutal power struggle that has made Kabul a city of ruins.



Tired but jubilant troops of Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani welcome him after capturing the Taliban's Charasyab headquarters on Sunday (AFP photo)

Seminar reviews Canadian role in Mideast social development

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A two-day seminar which was opened on Monday and entitled "Development in the Middle East: Building Sustainable Partnership" will discuss social development in the Middle East.

Hani Hourani, director of the Al Urdu Al Jadid Research Centre (UJRC), said the seminar was a continuation of the United Nations summit on world development held recently in Copenhagen.

Mr. Hourani said that the seminar will evaluate the social development problems in the region and the role of the Arab Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) and the role of Canadian NGOs, especially the Canadian organisation working in the Middle East.

Mr. Hourani told the Jordan Times that the conference "aims at raising the attention of North America and Canada to the necessity of developing the region. It is a joint problem which concerns both parties and not only the Third World Countries," he said.

"Independence is a problem that needs to be addressed and solved. It needs cooperation from both sides," Mr. Hourani said, adding that North America needs to abandon its "isolationist" policy.

"The isolationist policy in North America ignores problems of the Third World and says that Third World countries should solve their problems alone. We need to let them know that it is a joint problem," he said.

According to Mr. Hourani, problems that countries in this region suffer from include poverty, unemployment, and indebtedness.

The seminar, which will be attended by representatives of Canadian and Arab institutions, will review the relationship between the Arab countries and Canada, the role of the NGOs and Arab community in reinforcing cooperation between Canada and countries in the region.

The seminar, organised by UJRC and the Canadian Centre for Arab Studies for Development (CCAD), will focus on the social development issues in the Middle East, its horizons and challenges, and restrictions that Third World countries experience on the regional level.

The event will conclude with an analytical reading of Arab countries' position among the contemporary world. It will be presented by Samir Amin, president of the Third World Forum in Dakar and a prominent economist and intellectual. Mr. Amin has written many books that influenced Arab thoughts.

The first day's activities included an introduction by Mr. Hourani and Pierre Besnault, director of CCAD, followed by a lecture by Canadian Ambassador to Jordan Andrew Robinson entitled "Canada and the Middle East," and a speech by Minister of Social Development Salwa Daman-Masri.

Tuesday's session will include a session on Canada and development in the Middle East which will consist of a lecture by Norma Cook, director of NGOs division of CIDA, a lecture entitled "Canadian NGOs, and development in the Middle East" by Gabrielle Lachance of the Canadian Catholic Organisation for Development and Peace, and by a lecture by delegate of the Middle East working group Chris Dierksen-Hiebert.

The seminar will end with an evening session which will conclude with a lecture entitled "The Arab Countries in the World Today" presented by Mr. Amin.

Iran gets into party mood for 1374

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranians will welcome in the new year on Tuesday with festivities which date back centuries and have remained unchanged despite the 16-year-old Islamic revolution.

At 6:44 a.m. and 35 seconds exactly on Tuesday morning (just after 0200 GMT), Iran will enter the year 1374 according to a calendar mapped out by astronomers.

Unlike other Muslim countries which adopted the lunar calendar along with Islam, Iran kept its solar calendar inherited from Zoroastrianism, the religion of Persia before the arrival of Islam around 650 A.D.

The calendar starts from the year 622 A.D., when the Prophet Muhammad was exiled from Mecca to Medina.

New Year or "Nowruz" is the biggest celebration in Iran and a time for families to get together for several days of festivities, following strictly observed rituals handed down from the Zoroastrians who ruled Persia 3,000 years ago.

It also marks the spring equinox and was long frowned upon by Iranian authorities for its pagan associations.

But this year for the first time, the government seems to have accepted it. The usual warnings against "excesses" have disappeared and unprecedented efforts have been made to schedule entertainment programmes on the radio and television.

An essential part of the new year is a tableau on a table or carpet made up of various items, without which no Iranian household would feel complete.

They include a mirror, a goldfish bowl, painted eggs and seven objects beginning with the letter "S" in Persian — vinegar, garlic, an apple, corn biscuit, germinating seeds, coins and herbs.

Completing the collection is the Koran, which has replaced the Zoroastrian equivalent, the Avesta.

The days leading up to Nowruz are a round of frantic cleaning and shopping as each house must be spotless from top to bottom and new clothes have to be worn.

It is also a time for giving presents, and children impatiently wait for Uncle Nowruz — Iran's version of Father Christmas.

According to tradition, he is accompanied by Haji Firuz, a jolly small black person dressed in red who symbolises new year happiness.

As for the West, it is also a time for reconciliation and resolutions.

For almost two weeks Iran grinds to a halt. Offices, schools and most companies and shops are closed. There are no newspapers and the main towns are deserted.

But police patrol the busy roads, while trains, planes and buses are packed with people and hotels are fully booked, as families travel across the country to be reunited.

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U.S. discussing aid cuts with Egypt

CAIRO (R) — The top U.S. foreign aid official said on Sunday he was discussing with Egypt what would happen if and when Washington cuts its \$815 million annual economic aid.

Brian Atwood, administrator of U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), said budget problems back home meant there was pressure to cut back overseas aid, which the perceived slowness of Egypt's economic reforms was increasing.

But he said any cuts would not happen immediately and described the roughly \$40 billion Washington budget for Egypt since it signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1979 as a vital investment in regional prosperity and stability.

"We are discussing with the Egyptian government what would happen if we did scale it down," Mr. Atwood told Reuters during a tour of USAID projects in Cairo. "We are intelligent enough to see that we may have to suffer some cuts in the future."

Egypt has also received

some \$1.3 billion a year in U.S. military aid since the peace treaty was signed. Talk about this has been more guarded but diplomats say it is subject to the same Washington budget pressures as the economic aid.

Mr. Atwood was due to meet Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on Monday together with U.S. Vice President Al Gore, visiting Egypt to launch the "Partnership for Growth" project which aims to foster private sector links between the two countries.

He said the United States should resist isolationist calls by critics like arch-conservative Jesse Helms, now chair of the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee, who likened giving aid to "throwing money down foreign drains."

But Mr. Atwood said Egypt should also speed up its crawling economic reforms and open up more to international investment.

"In the foreseeable future a lot of questions are going to be raised if there isn't some movement soon here," he said, adding that increased private investment flows would reduce the need for aid.

Mr. Atwood said the aid had helped cut Egypt's population growth, increase agricultural cultivation, set up power and telecommunications projects and cut infant mortality.

He said he expected the Clinton administration's proposal to leave aid unchanged for Egypt for fiscal 1996 to pass through Congress.

"This is the largest foreign aid mission in the world... if we hadn't made the investment in development, either you would have seen a re-nomination of the (Arab-Israeli) conflict or a country imploding (under population pressure)," he said.

Touring USAID projects in Cairo including a sewer system in the slum area of Imbaba and a digital telephone exchange in the abandoned Cairo's medieval citadel, Mr. Atwood said cuts for cuts in USAID were "penny-wise and pound-foolish."

NEWS IN BRIEF

TV journalist assassinated in Algiers

ALGIERS (AFP) — Algerian television journalist Rachid Hammada was shot to death Monday near his home on the outskirts of the capital. Algiers and her sister were seriously injured, the television station announced. The circumstances behind the assassination and the identity of the assailants were unknown but in recent months several journalists here have fallen victim to a bloody campaign by suspected fundamentalists trying to oust the military-backed government. Scores of intellectuals, politicians and media people have been killed during the campaign which began after the military intervened in 1992 to cancel the second round of general elections the now-outlawed Islamic Salvation Front was poised to win.

Sudan to extradite hijackers — paper

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudan plans to extradite five Ethiopians who last week hijacked an Ethiopian airliner with 92 people on board, a Khartoum newspaper reported on Monday. The aircraft, an Ethiopian Airlines Boeing 737 with 85 passengers and seven crew on board, was on a domestic flight when the hijackers, who wanted to go to Sweden, forced it to fly to Al Obied in northwest Sudan. They surrendered to Sudanese authorities on Saturday and released all hostages unharmed. Sudan was reported to have promised the hijackers to intercede with Swedish embassy in Khartoum to give them asylum, but the Khartoum daily Akbar Al Youm said on Monday that Sudan would hand over the hijackers to Ethiopia. It said a committee headed by Justice Minister Abdul Aziz Shido would look into ways of handing over the five hijackers to the Ethiopian authorities under international law. The privately-owned Arabic daily gave no further details and there was no official comment immediately available on its report.

Iranian 'smuggler' killed in Gulf shootout

NICOSIA (R) — A suspected Iranian smuggler was killed and another wounded in a shootout at sea with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) coastguard, Arab sources said. They told Reuters that the body, the wounded man and other suspected armed Iranian smugglers involved in the shootout earlier this month off the UAE's Gulf coastline, were handed to the Iranian authorities. The sources said the UAE coastguard, a division of the Interior Ministry, spotted the men's boat approaching their coast. An exchange of fire followed when the Iranians refused to stop, they said.

1 killed, 5 hurt in floods in southern Egypt

ASSIUT (R) — One man was killed, five people were injured and over 140 houses collapsed in southern Egypt on Sunday evening when flood water from rain in the hills of the eastern desert swept into Nile Valley villages. The man was killed in the village of Al Sirriyah, about 200 kilometres south of Cairo, and the five were injured in other villages nearby, local officials said. The worst hit village was Gabal Al Teir, where 70 houses collapsed, they added. A cement factory at the town of Beni Khalel was flooded and suffered minor damage. The floods damaged a section of the main road from Cairo to the southern city of Assiut and the road was closed. It is the second bout of flooding in southern Egypt this season. About 600 people were killed in floods in November, most of them when the flood water carried burning fuel from a damaged fuel depot into the village of Dronka. The governor of Minya province has ordered tents and other relief supplies for the victims of the latest floods, the officials said. The victims will also receive cash handouts.

Lebanon police seize tonne of hashish

BEIRUT (R) — Police seized one tonne (2,200 pounds) of ground hashish and 150 kilograms of marijuana worth some \$900,000 in a mountain village north of Beirut, security sources said on Monday. They said the narcotics were seized on Sunday in a house in Inaya village in Jbel el-Rus, 40 kilometres north of the capital. The owner of the house was arrested, the sources added.

Libya to broadcast executions

CAIRO (AP) — Libya will televise the recent hangings of several murderers on a programme called "Security and Society," which has broadcast taped executions before. Libya's Television reported that "a number of people" convicted of "committing premeditated murder for trivial and base reasons in a brutal manner" were executed Sunday. It said tapes of the executions, along with the stories behind the murders, would be shown on Wednesday night. Libya, criticised by the United States for serious violations of human rights, announced earlier this month that it had abolished the country's last prison and freed the 305 inmates. But Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi has said capital punishment remains necessary to deter serious crime. In 1992, Libyan Television broadcast the taped hangings of six murderers, also on the programme "Security and Society."

Israeli scientists to help Tunisian farmers

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israeli agriculture experts will go to Tunisia this summer as part of a government training programme aimed at strengthening ties with Arab countries, foreign ministry officials announced Monday. Israel currently has no diplomatic relations with Tunisia, though officials said Monday low-level ties are expected in the near future. It will be the first time Israel conducts a training programme in Tunisia, said ministry spokesman Yigal Palmor. "We want friendly and cordial relations with Tunisia," said Palmor. "And we want to show the rest of the Arab World we are willing to share knowledge and we don't aspire to regional hegemony as they suspect."

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77311-19

PROGRAMME TWO
17:00 Le Prince El La Sirine
17:30 Pyramide
18:00 Tour Du Monde Tour Du Ciel
19:00 News in French
19:30 The Bold and the Beautiful
19:45 Fault Pas Rever
20:30 Home Improvement
21:10 The Nature of Things
22:00 News in English
22:30 Ernest Hemingway

PRAYER TIMES

04:15 Fajr
05:35 Guarded Prayer
11:43 Dhuhr
15:10 'Asr
17:51 Maghreb
19:08 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swedish, Tel. 610740
Assembly of God Church, Tel.
632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.
Church of the Annunciation Tel.
637440.
St. La Salle Church Tel. 661757.
Terzian Church Tel. 622360.
Church of the Annunciation Tel.
623541.
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel.
628343.

Armenian Catholic Church Tel.

771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel.
77261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Armenian International Church Tel.
625266.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel.
624328.
German-speaking Evangelical
Congregation Tel. 664195.
The Church of Jesus Christ of
Latter-day Saints Tel. 654922.
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in
Amman Tel. 811295.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department
of Meteorology.

Temperatures are expected to
rise further with clouds appearing
at low altitudes and winds easterly
light to moderate. In Aqaba, winds
will be northerly moderate and seas
calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 7/22
Aqaba 13/27
Desert 6/23
Jordan Valley 11/28

AMMAN:

Dr. Mohammad Al Nabawi 819213
Dr. Jamil Maraga 776149
Dr. Shababi Abu Zayid 739962
Dr. Shababi Al Izzi 733714
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asena pharmacy 637055
Al Maysara pharmacy 626672
Al Maysara pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Nairouhi pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632

DRUGS:

Dr. Mohammad Al Hila 279773
Alquds pharmacy (-)

ZARQA:

Dr. Fawzi Al Aqrabi 987725
Khalaf pharmacy 984117

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 63831
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Amman Municipality 897467
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information
(directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 810230
Central Amman Telephone
Repair 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority
Electric Power
Company 636381

FLIGHT INFORMATION

RU Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200
Great Catholic Hospital (02)272725
The Al Nafes Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 81381332
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn 642412
Akab Maternity, J. Amn 642416
Jabal Amman Maternity 642412
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 6641714
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Mustajir Hospital 6672279
The Islamic, Abdali 66612737
Al-Abdi, Abdali 6641646
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 7710173
Al-Basit, J. Ashrafieh 7751125
Army, Marzi 89161715
Queen Alia Hospital 666100
Amal Hospital 674153
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Im Sina Hospital (09)987322
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)999090
BIRZ:
Princess Beama Hospital (02)755555

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by
Royal Jordanian (RJ) information
department at the Queen Alia In-
ternational Airport Tel. (08)53200-
5, where it should always be veri-
fied.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

04:00 Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
07:30 Damascus (RJ)
08:15 Aqaba (RJ)
08:55 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:25 Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
10:15 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
16:35 London (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

04:20 Vienna (OS)
14:25 Rome (AZ)
14:35 Athens (AE)
20:30 Beirut (ME)
23:20 Amsterdam (KL)
23:50 Bucharest (RO)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

07:00 Aqaba (RJ)
08:15 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:00 Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
11:05 Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)
11:35 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:00 Paris, London (RJ)
12:45 Cairo (RJ)
13:45 Jeddah (RJ)
20:30 Laraca (RJ)
21:25 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
22:10 Kuala Lumpur, Singapore (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

10:15 Damascus, Rome (AZ)
14:35 Vienna (OS)
15:25 Sharjah Al Sheikh, Munich (YP)
15:25 Damascus (AZ)
21:00 Aden (DY)

MARKET PRICES

Apple/lower price in lbs per kg
Apple 700/500
Banana (Mukammur) 680
Banana (small) 620
Carrot 180/100
Cauliflower 180/100
Cucumbers (large) 150/100
Cucumbers (small) 280/180
Eggplant 160/80
Garlic 120/800
Green beans 240/150
Lemon 320/200
Marrow (large) 100/50
Marrow (small) 160/80
Onion (green) 240/140
Onion (dry) 320/250
Orange 400/300
Peas 500/400
Pepper (hot) 380/220
Pepper (sweet) 320/200
Potato 320/200
Spring 150/80
String Beans 450/400
Tomato 280/150



Her Majesty Queen Noor Monday inspects the Noor Al Hussein Salt Handicrafts Training Centre (photo by George Crystal)

Queen chairs meeting of NHF executive committee

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Monday chaired the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) executive meeting at the NHF Salt Handicrafts Training Centre.

The meeting reviewed the progress and the development of the Salt centre and discussed issues of concern arising from the expansion of the centre's activities and the increase in its annual number of applicants.

Queen Noor commended the centre on the services it is offering to the community, which include training some of the Ministry of Education's teachers in ceramics and textile production, replacing imported clay with the centre's locally produced clay and cooperating with the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company and the Hassa Women's Club to train people for the clay production project at Hassa.

After the meeting, the Queen toured the weaving and ceramics divisions, the silk screening and production units, the Salt library and the folklore museum.

The Salt Handicrafts Training Centre was established by the NHF in April 1987 in cooperation with the Salt Development Corporation (SDC) and the Italian government.

It is located in a wing of the SDC's Cultural Centre.

The Salt centre offers a free three-year training programme, for students who have finished 10th grade, in weaving, ceramics, silk screening, decoration and clay production as well as courses for the public and an in-service programme for trainers.

The centre expanded in 1991 to include a permanent showroom and two weaving and ceramics pilot production units.

New branches for training in jewellery, glass work and other handicrafts will be introduced in the near future.

The centre's mission is closely tied in with the overall NHF comprehensive and integrated development approach: the centre utilises traditionally-rooted and locally available resources to preserve Jordan's national heritage and helps its graduates launch their income-generating schemes thus enhancing their standard of living and self-reliance.

Over the past 10 years, Queen Noor has been encouraging the development of high-quality artisan centres in Jordan's villages and towns located near archaeological sites.

The NHF Salt centre aims to revive traditional trades and to market them, thereby enhancing the touristic attraction to the historic city of Salt, which is an important archaeological site dating back to the Iron Age.

In 1994, 75 people from Salt, Baqaa, Jerash, Zarqa, Irbid and Madaba enrolled in the three-year training programme, which can accommodate 90 students annually.

Queen Noor, accompanied by In'am Mufti, advisor to the Queen, was received by Anis Mousher, member of the NHF Executive Committee and of the Salt Development Corporation, members of the NHF Executive Committee: Sami Gammoh, Basam Saket and Subhi Ma'ani, Ja'far Shami, president of Salt Development Corporation, Eid Qataneh, governor of Baqaa, Abdullah Hindawi, NHF acting director general, Najah Massot, project director of the NHF Salt Handicraft Centre.

Support committee appeals to U.S. vice president to oppose Russian action in Chechnya

By Cathy King
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Availing itself on the occasion of U.S. Vice President Al Gore's arrival Tuesday in the Kingdom, the Jordanian Committee for the Support of the People of the Independent Caucasian Republic (JCSCP) has appealed to Mr. Gore and the United States to more actively oppose Russian military action in Chechnya.

In a letter addressed to Mr. Gore, the JCSCP urged the United States to "press for the end to the war and for a peaceful settlement of the crisis rather than indirectly financing Russian actions by continuing U.S. economic development aid to Russia."

The statement, obtained by the Jordan Times, solicited the U.S. to impress that Moscow lifts restrictions and hindrances on the delivery of humanitarian aid to Chechnya. In addition it called for a U.S. boycott of the May summit to be held in Moscow, as long as Russia maintains its "disproportionate and indiscriminate assault on Chechnya."

Mr. Gore's visit to the Middle East began Sunday in Egypt where he discussed a joint Egyptian-American programme to encourage Egypt's private sector. Mr. Gore should be here for two days starting today, but the U.S. embassy declined to reveal any further details of his visit.

The JCSCP has requested the U.S. embassy to arrange a meeting between representatives of the committee and the vice president to "discuss the humanitarian aspect of the crisis in Chechnya."

Russian military intervention in the breakaway Republic of Chechnya began on Dec. 11. Since then, and according to recent United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates, 410,000 people have become refugees as a result of the conflict.

Russian forces took the capital Grozny in late February and have been launching attacks on Chechen strongholds south of it, including helicopter bombing sorties on the southern mountainous region where Chechen separatists have set up bases for guerrilla war.

Meanwhile, a statement issued earlier this month by the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) in Geneva said that the Russian authorities were hindering the distribution of humanitarian relief in all parts of Chechnya.

In January, the first consignment of Jordanian aid was to be shipped by the ICRC to the Chechen Republic. According to an official at ICRC offices in Jordan, the shipment is still in Brussels.

"It is in the process of repackaging, but it will be sent to its final destination as soon as administrative procedures have been completed," the official told the Jordan Times yesterday.

Donations collected by the JCSCP and other charities included medicine, medical equipment and baby milk.

The letter to Mr. Gore and signed by JCSCP chairman Said Bino, also reiterated the right of the Chechen people as a "distinct ethnic nation" to self-determination, underlining their legitimate claim to human rights.

Jordan marks Karameh battle

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan today marks the 27th anniversary of Al Karameh Battle in which Jordanian forces defeated a dawn attack launched by Israel in the Jordan Valley area.

On March 21, 1968, Israeli troops, supported by armoured vehicles, combat planes and artillery, made incursions in the central Jordan Valley area.

The large-scale, three-pronged Israeli attack covered an area of 40-kilometres, stretching from the Prince Mohammad Bridge in the north to the Dead Sea in the south.

The attack was aimed at occupying the eastern heights of the Jordan Valley (the Baqaa heights) in order to take control of the region.

It also aimed at destroying the morale of the people and armed forces and forcing them to flee.

The large number of troops and personnel which took part in the Israeli attack was clear evidence of the Jewish state's policy to enlarge its strategic depth towards the east.

Taking part in the battle on the Israeli side were two armoured brigades, one infantry and one paratroop unit, five artillery battalions, four squadrons of fighter planes and several helicopters, in addition to two combat divisions.

Despite the large number of military personnel and the air and artillery cover, the battle turned out to be a complete defeat for the Israelis, who were forced to withdraw under the cover of night because of the fierce resistance by the Jordan Armed Forces.

Israeli losses during the battle were three times higher than the losses during the June 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

In a speech delivered by His Majesty King Hussein on the eve of March 21, 1968 after the battle was over, the King described Al Karameh as a glorious battle that will always be a source of pride to the nation.

"Al Karameh Battle, in all its dimensions, is a turning point in our lives," the King said. "It has violently shaken the myth of the Israeli superiority and proved in front of the world that our courageous soldiers and our sons have been able to achieve victory and protect our homeland from the avaricious invaders."

"Al Karameh had given the Arab Nation the opportunity to reevaluate itself in a way closer to the truth and to the reality," the King added.

National observances are expected to be held today throughout the Kingdom.



Princess Basma in N.Y. for preparatory meetings

NEW YORK (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Sunday arrived in New York to participate in preparatory meetings for the World Conference on Women which will be hosted by China later this year.

The preparatory meeting, which started Wednesday will conclude April 4.

Princess Basma will take part in discussions on the role of women in various walks of life and issues which will be discussed at the Beijing conference to start in August.

In addition to poverty and education, the preparatory meetings will also discuss violence against women, armed conflicts, women's participation in the decision-making process, their role in managing natural resources, protecting the environment and human rights as well as the role of the mass media in supporting women's positive contributions in their societies.

In the earlier sessions of the preparatory committees, the participants called for addressing violence against women, with the representative of Switzerland stressing the need to tackle some traditions and norms encouraging violence against women.

Some of the participants expressed their belief that the major problem facing women around the world was poverty.

Body of Spanish tourist to be flown home today

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The body of a Spanish tourist, who Friday died in an accident in Petra, will be flown to Spain today, a source at the Spanish embassy said Monday.

The accident victim, a 47-year-old woman on a tour with a group of about 30 other Spanish tourists, was on her way to the High Place of Sacrifice in Petra when a rock fell from above her and hit the back of her head, police confirmed Monday.

"Sheep grazing in that area caused a rock to fall, and it struck the woman in the back of the head," police said.

Minister of Tourism Abdul Ilah Khabb Monday described the accident as "tragic" and said that with the increasing numbers of tourists to Petra, authorities have moved to provide adequate medical services to protect visitors to the area.

"A mobile health clinic from the Civil Defence Department is going to be dispatched to Petra to provide 24-hour emergency care services in Petra proper."

According to Mr. Khatib, doctors to man the clinic will be provided by the Ministry of Health.

The minister said that Friday's accident involving the Spanish tourist was extraordinary. He added that earlier minor incidents had already prompted the various concerned ministries to take steps to protect visitors to Petra.

The forensic expert at Al Bashir Hospital, where the victim's body was taken, told the Jordan Times Monday that the woman died from a fracture to the skull which caused haemorrhaging in the brain.

The doctor added that the woman died 30 minutes after she was struck by the stone.

"It was a fatal injury and there was no way that the victim could have survived," the doctor said.

According to the Spanish embassy, it took health rescue teams about 40 minutes to reach the victim.

Police said the woman's body was taken to Ma'an Hospital then was transferred to Al Bashir Hospital in Amman for an autopsy.

An official at the Spanish embassy said that it was a most unfortunate accident.

"We hope that in the future there would be appropriate health rescue teams to aid the thousands of tourists who will be visiting Petra," the official told the Jordan Times.

Seminar seeks ways to cope with water pollution

AMMAN (Petra) — President of the Jordan Environment Society (JES) Ahmad Obeidat Monday called for adopting clear policies on re-using waste water for industrial purposes.

At a seminar on combating water and environmental pollution held at the Amman Chamber of Industry, Mr. Obeidat, a former prime minister and senator, called for protecting water resources by utilising modern technologies, noting that the amount of dangerous industrial refuse in 1993 was estimated at 43,000 tonnes.

Mr. Obeidat stressed the need to have sustainable policies to preserve the environment, especially water resources to protect people from various kinds of pollution.

"It is time now to end this long 'controversy' about the industry and the environment centering around the effects of environment (protection) on the industrial sector and its obstructing industrial development," he said that the seminar, which is organised by the society in cooperation with the Ministry of Water and Irrigation and the Amman Chamber of Industry, is being held in observance of the International Water Day which falls on Wednesday.

Minister of Water and Irrigation Saleh Irsheidat told participants in the seminar that protecting water resources from pollution, especially industrial pollution was a sensitive and important issue and one of the ministry's priorities.

He said this required studying and tackling the issue by the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, the Amman Chamber of Industry and major industrial companies in the Kingdom which use large amounts of water.

The minister said this cooperation between these institutions is a living example of the interaction between the ministry and the private sector.

"This is what we are seeking, not to have consumers of water for various purposes excluded from participating in this vital field," he said.

"We hope that this cooperation would lead to results benefiting Jordanian industry, especially in the field of re-using water, and would help resolve the problem of industrial pollution and protecting surface and underground water which are considered an important national resource."

He said one of the major problems facing Jordan is the widening gap between available water resources and increasing demand for water which is a consequence of rising population and improved living standards of citizens.

He pointed out that the ministry was anticipating more demand for water in view of the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty and the expected industrial and touristic ventures that would be established in Jordan.

"This might form a great pressure on our water resources in Jordan," he said, adding that the ministry was about to prepare plans, policies and projects to strike a balance between the available water resources and the expected demand.

Abdul Ilah Tabbaa, second deputy of the chamber's board of directors chairman, said the chamber has taken major strides to combat water pollution.

Mr. Tabbaa said that in 1991 the chamber established a department on environmental affairs to follow up problems related to pollution and industrial waste water.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

NOVEL RECITAL

- ★ Novel recital by novelist Raja' Abu Ghazaleh at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art at 6:00 p.m.

NEWS

- ★ ABC News Highlights and McNeil-Lehrer News Hour at the American Center at 5:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Bani Hamida Mother's Day display at Bani Hamida House (8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.)
- ★ Exhibition of abstract art by 'Alia' 'Ammoura and oil paintings by Salman 'Abbas at Orfali Art Gallery.
- ★ Exhibition of abstract art by Abeer Bawwab at the Royal Cultural Centre. Also displaying oil paintings by Munira Al Tunisiya.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by several artists entitled "Faces" at the Baqaa Art Gallery, Fuhels.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by Nazi Irtemcelik at Alia Art Gallery.
- ★ Exhibition of art by Rola Shukairy at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by Iraqi artist Hansa Mahallah at Ab'ad Art Gallery.
- ★ Exhibition by Syrian artist Marwan Qassab Bashi at Darat Al Funun. Also showing a permanent exhibition of contemporary Arab artists.

وزارة الأشغال العامة والإسكان

دائرة العطاءات الحكومية

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS AND HOUSING

GOVERNMENT TENDERS DIRECTORATE

Invitation For Bids

Irbid Wastewater Project

(62/95 Central)

1. The Water Authority of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation through the Ministry of Public Works and Housing/Government Tenders Directorate, (G.T.D) invites experienced foreign contractors from countries which meet the eligibility criteria of the European Investment Bank and local contractors who have been prequalified by the Ministry of Public Works and Housing as first of second Grade in Water and Sewerage, or a joint venture between eligible foreign and local contractors to submit their offers for the supply, delivery and construction of Irbid Wastewater Project. Foreign contractors are strongly encouraged to joint venture or associate with the above graded local contractors.
2. The project consists of the supply and installation of about 22.5 km of concrete pipes for wastewater collection system ranging in diameter from 150mm to 200mm.
3. Tender documents are available and may be purchased from the Government Tenders Directorate at the Ministry of Public Works and Housing in Amman: P.O.Box 1220 Tel. (+) 962 6 607 481, Fax (+) 962 6 606 751.
4. The non-refundable fee for each set of tender documents will be JD 200.
5. The latest date for the purchase of tender documents by the eligible bidders is April 6th, 1995.
6. Bids are due not later than 1300 hours, Jordan local time, on Saturday, April 15th, 1995 to the office of the Government Tenders Directorate.

Eng. George Haddad
Director General

The National Music Conservatory/Noor Al Hussein Foundation

presents

ARAB MUSIC FESTIVAL

22-24 March 1995

Date	Time	Concert	Ticket
Wed. 22	8:00 p.m.	Oud Duet: Munir Bashir and his son Omar	JD 7
Thurs. 23	6:30 p.m.	The Music Map of Jordan: an illustrated lecture by Yusra Jawharieh Annita	JD 3
	8:00 p.m.	Irbid Arab Music Ensemble: 24 singers and 16 instrumentalists, Dr. Mohammad Ghawanmeh, conductor	JD 3
Fri. 24	8:00 p.m.	The Orchestra of the National Music Conservatory will perform compositions by Arab orchestral composers (Mohammad Othman Sidiq, conductor) along with the Band of the National Music Conservatory (Kifah Fakhouri, conductor).	JD 7

Place: The Royal Cultural Centre - Conference Hall.

Tickets from:

- Babiche, tel. 661322
- Ahlia Abella, tel. 688481
- Music Box, tel. 815745
- Romero, tel. 644227
- The Royal Cultural Centre, tel. 661026
- The National Music Conservatory, tel. 687620

In cooperation with

ROYAL JORDANIAN
الأشغال العامة والإسكان

Nerve-gas attack on Tokyo subway kills 6, hurts thousands

TOKYO (AP) — One of the world's busiest subway system turned into a deathtrap for unsuspecting commuters Monday when nerve gas sprayed through cars and stations at the height of morning rush hour, killing six and injuring thousands. Authorities suspected terrorism.

All over central Tokyo, subway passengers fainted, vomited and went into convulsions as the poisonous fumes spread. Some of those stricken foamed at the mouth and bled from the nose, witnesses said.

Police said the toxic agent was believed to be the nerve gas Sarin, which can be fatal even in small doses when absorbed through the skin or inhaled. Japanese press reports cited authorities as saying the substance was deliberately planted in parcels in at least five subway cars on three train lines.

Sarin was blamed for seven

mysterious deaths last June in the central Japan town of Matsumoto. The source of the gas was never identified, and there were no arrests.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility in Monday's attack, which would be one of Japan's worst incidents of terrorism ever.

Authorities refused to discuss suspects — either individuals or groups — and would not say whether they included Aum Shinri Kyo, a religious cult that has been previously accused of making Sarin.

The group which has been linked by press reports to several unsolved kidnappings denied any involvement in Monday's attack and threatened in a statement to sue anyone who suggested there was any link.

Two odd incidents earlier this month could yield clues. On March 15, three myster-

ious attacks cases were discovered at a Tokyo subway station, each containing three tanks with an unknown liquid, small motorised fans, a vent, and a battery. One was giving off a vapor.

Ten days before that, 19 people were taken to hospitals after they inhaled mysterious fumes in a train car in Yokohama and complained of eye and respiratory pain. The source of the fumes was not found.

Within hours of Monday's attack, hospitals in central Tokyo were inundated, admitting more than 1,000 patients for treatment or observation. Doctors and nurses rushed frantically to administer CPR, give oxygen and hook up intravenous drips.

More than a dozen people were reported in critical condition. Officials estimated that thousands of others suffered lesser symptoms including

coughing and dizziness and did not obtain treatment.

"When I got to the hospital, I couldn't move my hands enough to write my name and I could barely speak," said commuter Masahito Ito.

The attack struck at a cherished national institution, Tokyo's clean and efficient subway network. Running with the precision of Swiss watches, the trains carry 2.7 billion passengers a year, about twice as many as the New York subway system.

The attack also came as Japan still was recovering from the devastating Jan. 17 earthquake in the port city of Kobe that killed nearly 5,500 people.

For many, the sight of hundreds of ordinary people struck down on their way to work rekindled fears that their country is not the safe, orderly place they had always considered it to be.

"Japan has turned into a scary country," said taxi driver Koichi Horie. "We can't allow crimes like this."

The mood in the capital was one of crisis. Television carried non-stop coverage, and newspapers rushed into print with special editions. "Violent poison terrorism in subway," read a banner headline in the Yomiuri, Japan's largest circulation newspaper.

However, the stock market was unshaken. Analysts said dealers closely followed the situation, but prices finished only moderately lower in light trading.

Japanese bureaucrats and government officials — who were sharply criticised in the wake of the earthquake for slowness and ineptitude — acted swiftly.

Workers clad in protective gear quickly poured into stations. Troops were called out, including a special anti-



Subway passengers wait to receive medical attention Monday after inhaling a lethal nerve gas which was allegedly unleashed by unknown attackers in the Tokyo metro system during rush hour killing six people and injuring thousands (AFP photo)

chemical-warfare squad.

Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama ordered that no effort be spared in helping the victims and in the investigation. Chief government spokesman Kozo Igarashi called the attack a hateful act.

Metropolitan Police said the case was being treated as a murder investigation, and authorities ordered unspecified steps to beef up security on transport systems.

As Monday's drama unfolded, so did chaotic scenes on major Tokyo thoroughfares.

People overcome by the gas were carried out to the sidewalk. Others staggered out on their own, gasping.

Emergency vehicles raced to stations, sirens screaming, and helicopters buzzed overhead. At hard-hit Tsukiji Station in central Tokyo, a nearby temple was pressed into service as a first-aid centre.

But most pedestrians appeared remarkably calm, obeying police orders to take detours and stay away from station entrances and exits.

The attack snarled Tokyo's already slow-moving rush-hour traffic, and closures were expected to cause major transport problems in coming days. Officials did not know how long it would be before the capital's busy Hibiya Line and parts of the Marunouchi Line would reopen.



Office workers watch over their colleague at a subway station Monday following the emission of a poisonous gas in the Tokyo Metro system which has left six people dead and hundreds hospitalised (AFP photo)

Shan rebels attack Burmese town

BANGKOK (R) — Fighters loyal to Burma's opium warlord Khun Sa raided a town in northeastern Burma early Monday and clashed with government troops.

The raid was the latest in a series of guerrilla attacks aimed at deflecting a government army offensive against the separatist rebels.

Some 60 fighters from Khun Sa's Mong Tai Army (MTA) staged the early-morning raid on a Burmese army barracks and military guest houses in Tachilek, a bustling border town opposite the Thai town of Mae Sai, rebel sources and Thai officials on the border said.

The rebels, firing rocket-propelled grenades and automatic rifles, attacked for about one hour before withdrawing, one MTA official said.

But several pockets of guerrillas were apparently trapped in the town and fighting continued throughout Monday morning. Thai officials in Mae Sai said.

Thai Television showed pictures of MTA fighters and Burmese government troops exchanging small arms fire on the Burmese bank of the Nam Sai River which separates the two countries.

Several buildings in the town were set ablaze by grenades and rockets fired by Burmese troops, the guerrilla official said.

Thai authorities said more than 40 guerrillas had crossed into Thailand after the initial attacks where they were seized along with their weapons.

Hundreds of Burmese civilians had also crossed the border river into Thailand where they were taking refuge at three Buddhist temples, Thai authorities said.

Burmese troops kept up an artillery barrage in the direction of the retreating rebels throughout the morning.

Both Thai and guerrilla sources said casualties on both sides were not yet known.

Earlier Monday Thailand closed the border crossing to Tachilek where hundreds of tourists, both Thai and foreign, go sightseeing and shopping every day.

Monday's attack was the latest in a spate of guerrilla raids launched after Burmese forces began an offensive against a guerrilla base in mountains 25 kilometres west of Tachilek last week.

MTA guerrillas ambushed a Burmese army unit at

Tachilek's Airfield Saturday and destroyed a bridge near the town of Kengtung, on the main road linking Tachilek with central Burma and China, on the same day, the guerrillas said.

The rebels blew up another bridge on the road nearer Tachilek last Friday and killed several government soldiers with another bomb on a road Thursday.

Guerrilla officers say they are trying to harass government forces and prevent reinforcements and ammunition supplies from reaching the government troops locked in battle with the MTA in the mountains.

The guerrillas say Burmese forces are trying to clear them from the economically important eastern section of Shan state.

MTA Commander Khun Sa says he is a Shan nationalist fighting for the independence of Shan state. Burma's military government says he is a drug-trading bandit who must be destroyed.

Khun Sa, who says he only taxes opium traders in his area of control in the opium-growing Golden Triangle region, has been indicted in the United States on narcotics-trafficking charges.

Russian general calls for NATO to be dissolved

BONN (AFP) — The chief of the Russian General Staff, in an interview published Monday, called for the "immediate dissolution" of NATO, saying the end of the cold war meant the Western military alliance was no longer needed.

In the interview with the German newspaper Die Welt, Lieutenant General Mikhail Kolesnikov said Russian military leaders supported President Boris Yeltsin's opposition to NATO.

He said: "The existence of the alliance was undoubtedly important for the West during the cold war, but it

doesn't make sense now."

He also criticised the extent of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe's treaty on conventional disarmament, saying Russia "is our house and we have to be able to decide where and how to move the furniture around."

Calling for a "drastic reduction in nuclear arsenals," he said the Russian general staff was working on the concept of a START-III accord, even though a disarmament treaty arising from START-II had not yet been ratified in Russia.

Turning to the war in

Chechnya involving 30,000 Russian soldiers, he said the Russian army had suffered 1,567 fatalities since it entered the breakaway mainly Muslim republic on Dec. 11.

Orders to the troops there were not issued from Moscow, "even though I get a report at 8 a.m. every day," he said, adding that "operational decisions are in the hands of local commanders."

In his interview in Moscow with the German daily and four other foreign papers, he denied claims that the general staff had lost influence since the conflict began, or that military leaders did not

agree Mr. Yeltsin.

He said "the words strategy and Chechnya" were incompatible and, as the conflict was "an internal Russian affair," there could be "no question of a change" in Russian military thinking.

He did, however, concede there had been errors in preparing "mentally" for the intervention and putting the task force into operation.

"We simply didn't know how to expose that criminal Dudayev's real face," he added, speaking of Chechen secessionist President Dzhokhar Dudayev.

China announces crackdown on temples in Tibet

BEIJING (R) — Authorities in China's Himalayan region of Tibet, seeking to crush the widespread influence of the Dalai Lama, have announced a crackdown on temples and monks in the deeply Buddhist region.

They announced regulations to limit the number of monks in each temple, saying monks outnumbered high-school students in some places, and to expel lamas from monasteries where they are too numerous, the Tibet Daily said in a report seen Monday.

"We must absolutely now allow anyone, especially young people, to be forced to become monks, not allow temples and living Buddhas to be public... not allow incitement to unrest under the pretext of religion," it said.

The leadership of temples must be in the hands of patriotic and law-abiding monks," the newspaper said. Buddhist monks and nuns have been at the forefront of often violent protests against Chinese rule in recent years, and temples have expanded as Beijing has tried to ease restrictions to mollify the local populace.

Officials reached by telephone in Tibet's capital, Lhasa, declined to comment.

A front-page article in the newspaper's March 10 edition, the 36th anniversary of an abortive uprising against Chinese rule, urged Tibetans to be vigilant against the Dalai Lama's supporters, condemning the exiled god-king and his followers as a "tool of Western hostile forces."

The Dalai Lama, winner of the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize, and his followers were trying to westernise and divide China, the newspaper said.

The Dalai Lama's exiled government was controlled by corrupt relatives, the newspaper said.

Under the regulations, new temples may not be built without the approval of authorities, feudal slavery must not be revived and people must not be forced to believe in Buddhism, the newspaper said.

Communist Party cadres must not display the Dalai Lama's picture, set up altars in their homes or send their children to overseas schools run by the Dalai Lama's supporters, it said, hinting at the spreading influence of the re-

gion's exiled spiritual and temporal leader even among officials.

It defended the regulations, saying even China's last dynasty, the Qing (1644-1911), implemented strict regulations governing temples, monks and nuns.

"In regulating temples, monks and nuns, the people's government led by the Communist Party should not be inferior to the Qing dynasty," the newspaper said.

At the end of 1993, there were 1,643 temples in Tibet, more than the number of villages and towns in the region.

The region's monks and nuns totalled 40,670, accounting for 1.77 per cent of Tibet's population and exceeding the number of high-school students, it said.

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Oscar fever gives big boost at box office

LOS ANGELES (R) — The Academy Award nominations have generated a box-office bonanza for a handful of smaller films in recent weeks, and the movies that win Hollywood's highest honours next Monday can expect to reap even richer rewards.

A prime example of Oscar fever is The Madness of King George, a lush, 18th century comedy-drama that picked up four nominations, including best actor for Nigel Hawthorne and best actress for Helen Mirren.

The film, a Samuel Goldwyn Co. release that had grossed only \$3.1 million the day before the nominations were announced Feb. 14, has seen its box-office take soar to more than \$9.5 million.

Samuel Goldwyn President Meyer Gottlieb said it's all a matter of giving broader "visibility" to a film that otherwise would have appealed only to a small art-house audience.

"What the Academy Award nominations... allow us to do is publicise that this is a performance worthy of seeing and a talent that is a new discovery," Gottlieb said.

He estimated that an Oscar win in a major category could boost the film to nearly \$30 million in ticket sales.

"We're dealing with a

lead) actor that no one's ever seen on the screen before," Gottlieb said. "We don't have Tom Hanks."

On the other hand, Forrest Gump, which does have Tom Hanks, won the greatest number of Oscar nominations this year but has felt only a modest boost at the box office.

Forrest Gump, which took 13 nominations including best picture, best director and best actor, as of March 13 had grossed \$312 million, about an \$8 million increase over the prior month but only a small percentage increase in its total.

Similarly, Pulp Fiction, a violent dark comedy from Miramax Films which won seven nominations, has seen its box office total rise to \$88.7 million from \$76.1 million in the four weeks since the nominations were announced.

"Both films had seen the best of their theatrical runs prior to the nominations," said Jeffrey Lagsdon, managing director and entertainment industry analyst at Seidler Cos.

But he said both films are expected to enjoy a big success when they come out on videotape. Paramount Pictures is set to release Forrest Gump in video in late April, well timed to cash in on its

expected success on Oscar night.

But while Oscar nominations are so highly coveted that studios often synchronise their film releases for maximum exposure, the failure of one critically acclaimed film to pick up a major nomination has also paid off handsomely this year.

Hoop Dreams, a riveting documentary about two inner-city teenagers with dreams of pro basketball stardom, had been plagued as a long-shot for a best picture nomination but was considered a shoo-in for a best documentary nomination.

The film ended up receiving only one minor nomination — for best editing.

But the resulting highly publicised outcry against the Oscar snub has helped turn Hoop Dreams into one of the highest-grossing documentaries of all time.

Hoop Dreams has taken in \$6.3 million, up from \$3.9 million a month ago, and is expected to surpass the record \$6.7 million of Roger And Me.

"I think what you've got in the case of Hoop Dreams is the first time that not getting nominated has helped a film," said Liz Manne, senior vice president of marketing for Fine Line Features, the film's distributor.

Actor Terence Hill relives memories of Dresden

BONN (AFP) — An actor who fulfilled his dream of seeing his gran tomb while promoting latest film in the city of childhood, Dresden, man newspaper said Hill, born Mario (son of an Italian/German mother, Welt Am Sonntag about his emotions the city last week premier of his Troublemaker. The old actor, who was in the small town matzsch, 20 kilo miles) from Dresden's family lived to from 1943, told there: "I have always of seeing Dresden the tomb of my gr at Lommatzsch."

The terrible night 1945, when allied destroyed the city the Florence of and killed 25,000 mother, he said, him for hours, saturation bomb he waited at the back for a week a ing the time see dead and wound beneath the city.

Cuba, Spair deal to fund dozen films

HAVANA (AFP) — Film-makers, who most state support collapse of the country's economy struck a deal with finance 12 films in four years. During Cuban film-makers out 12 films annua figure dropped off the Soviet Union grated, Cuba lost i and the economy Last year, just th length films were Cuba and one sh

The full-length Right Of Asylum Cortazar, The Ele The Bicycle by Ji Tabio and Queen by Julio Garcia

The shorter film gascar by Fernan The state-run Cuba of Art and Cinem and the mixed Spanish film Heko Cuba while Lide signed for Spain.

Spain produces 60 Spain's films. Car head of the Cuba of Art and Cinem said all 12 films o the agreement v made in Cuba, a include some that a completion. One i namera by Tomas Alea and Juan Car who also made S And Chocolate. Th been nominated as ign film for the Academy Awards.

Seoul to tight laws on liquor cigarettes

SEOUL (AFP) — Korea plans to health-warning label liquor, including brands, and further restrictions on cigar and promotion, the language Korea Ti A draft health decr may be approved cabinet this month

drinks with an alcohol tent of 17 per cent (or more to carry labels, according weekend edition of t paper. The exact w Korean has yet to i sed, but it would mean "excessive dri harmful to health."

The decree would i malise a total ban o sion and radio com for hard liquors approved by broadca authorities, and allow c cials for less potent d be aired only after The restrictions spa popular sweet-ric "chongju" — the lo sion of Japanese sal for rituals and tradi offered even to mino its alcohol content is 1 cent or lower, the Tim Manufacturers who fa the warning labels punishable by one ya or five million won (in fines, the report sa health decree would installation of cigarett ing machines in mig and other places minors are banned, i approved this month, t assure would be annou April and enforced Sept. 1. But owners isting vending machi public areas will be until June 1997 to n them, the report said.

Before the queen at parliament, a sm brief demonstration outside the gates a group of about 20 schoolchildren shoute want food" before d off down a side street did not intervene

The queen arrived warm welcome in su windy weather at Town's Victoria and Waterfront.

She stepped off the Yacht Britannia to a salute, accompanied Prince Philip and Secretary Douglas H was greeted by Mr. and his official compa the day. Rochelle described by presiden cials as "a close rel flover by South Afr Force planes traini white and blue sm inspected a ceremon and was presented to members.

Scores of small least one bearing painted sign that re come Maam," brave southeasterlies to ac the yacht into the where more than 5.6 royal watchers, mos white, lined the do

World
Queen
decorates
Mandela,
addresses
S. African
parliamen

CAPE TOWN (AFP) — Queen Elizabeth II, who bestowed Britain's highest honour on President Mandela and his wife, said Africa's transition to democracy at the start of the state visit here.

In a speech to members of the first parliament of the new South Africa, the queen described the new nation as a "new dawn" and said she was "proud to be part of this historic moment."

The queen, who is 78, arrived in Cape Town on Monday for a three-day visit. She will be joined by Prince Philip and their four children.

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Queen decorates Mandela, addresses S. African parliament

CAPE TOWN (AFP) — Queen Elizabeth II Monday bestowed Britain's top royal honour on President Nelson Mandela and praised South Africa's transition to democracy, at the start of her first state visit here.

In a speech to a joint sitting of the first post-apartheid parliament, the queen described the negotiating process and last April's all-race elections to end more than 350 years of white rule in this country as "little short of a miracle."

The queen also referred to watching her father, King George VI, open parliament in 1947, saying the memories of that tour of South Africa 48 years ago have remained with her.

"I have wanted to return to this magnificent country," the queen said. "That wish has never deserted me through half a century during which you have seen turmoil and tragedy."

The queen also announced that Mr. Mandela would visit Britain next year, but did not give a firm date for the trip. It would be his first to Britain since he became South Africa's first democratically elected president.

"Next year, I look forward to welcoming you, Mr. President, on the first ever state visit to Britain by a South African head of state," the queen said.

"You (Mandela) are, of course, well versed in making history but I hope that, even for you, that will be an important milestone," she said.

The queen, dressed in a blue-grey two-piece outfit with matching hat, told the joint session of the National Assembly and Senate that South Africa's "spirit of reconciliation is a shining example to the world."

Mr. Mandela, who earlier received the royal Order of Merit, and Deputy President F.W. de Klerk, a former president, were also hailed by the queen.

"They typify the new South Africa, which is showing that, with far-sighted, able leadership, willingness to compromise, and patient determination in the quest for peace, it is possible to reconcile the seemingly irreconcilable," the queen said.

One notable absence from the parliament, where the queen received a standing ovation, was that of Mr. Mandela's estranged wife, Winnie.

Before the address to parliament, the two leaders exchanged honours, with the queen awarding Mr. Mandela the Order of Merit and receiving the Order of Good Hope in return.

"Your Majesty, this is a high honour indeed," Mr. Mandela said as he received the award at a brief ceremony on the steps of Tuinhuys, the president's offices in the Cape Town parliamentary complex.

Mr. Mandela told the queen that the Order of Good Hope was the "highest, highest honour that we can give."

Before the queen arrived at parliament, a small and brief demonstration occurred outside the gates when a group of about 20 black schoolchildren shouted: "We want food!" before running off down a side street; police did not intervene.

The queen arrived to a warm welcome in sunny but windy weather at Cape Town's Victoria and Albert Waterfront.

She stepped off the Royal Yacht Britannia to a 21-gun salute, accompanied by Prince Philip and Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd and was greeted by Mr. Mandela and his official companion for the day, Rochelle Murrara, described by presidential officials as "a close relative."

After a Royal Salute and a flyover by South African Air Force planes trailing red, white and blue smoke, she inspected a ceremonial guard and was presented to cabinet members.

Scores of small craft, at least one bearing a hand-painted sign that read "Welcome Ma'am," braved strong southeasterlies to accompany the yacht into the harbour where more than 5,000 eager royal watchers, most of them white, lined the dockfront.



The chairman of the Finnish Social Democratic Party Paavo Lipponen is all smiles as he celebrates his party's victory in the Finnish general elections at the party's headquarters in Helsinki (AFP photo)

New Finnish government may take weeks after opposition's elections win

HELSINKI (R) — The opposition Social Democrats, victorious in Finland's general election, said Monday they would seek to form a broad-based coalition government in negotiations that could last for weeks.

"The difficult question will be the composition of the government and its programme," said Paavo Lipponen, the party's 53-year-old leader. "A broad-based coalition and a strong government are needed. We do not exclude any option."

With 63 seats in the 200-seat parliament, the Social Democrats gained 15 seats from the 1991 election and turned in its best performance since World War II to become the largest party. But it did not win enough votes to rule on its own.

Mr. Lipponen, speaking on

Finnish radio after it was clear his party had won Sunday's election, said a new government would take weeks to arrange but should be formed before May 1.

He is widely expected to replace Esko Aho, 40, of the Agrarian-based Centre Party, as prime minister of the recession-hit Nordic nation of five million.

"Lipponen is the obvious nominee to try to bring together a new majority government," said the respected daily Helsingin Sanomat.

President Martti Ahtisaari, who will eventually appoint the next government, is expected to give an indication about the shape of the next government at a news conference.

Mr. Lipponen, who campaigned on the need to curb a 20 per cent unemployment

rate, said the result showed a wish for change.

Though there was a clear shift to the left in the election, Lipponen is likely to seek support from at least one of the two big parties in the defeated centre-right coalition, the Centre Party or the Conservative Party.

With 44 and 39 parliamentary seats respectively, both the Centre Party and the Conservatives lost in political influence but remained the second- and third-largest parties.

The three big parties, including the Social Democrats, have all pledged to save further in state spending to stabilise national debt but they differ on what kind of expenditure to cut. Financial markets reacted calmly to the results.

Minsk Group postpones Karabakh talks

VIENNA (AFP) — International mediators Monday postponed peace negotiations due to start in Stockholm on the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, saying conditions were not right for talks.

The 12-nation Minsk Group, appointed by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to find a solution to the dispute, said Russia and Sweden, which co-chair the group, had put back the talks, due to last from March 20-24, with regret.

Sources at the organisation's Vienna headquarters said they had been forced to postpone the talks because Azerbaijan refused to recognise the delegation from Nagorno-Karabakh.

"The co-chairmanship deplores that it has found it necessary to take this decision at a time when a ceasefire has been in effect in the region for 10 months and the process in search of a stable peace consequently should be intensified," the OSCE said.

At least 20,000 people have died in seven years of fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh, a region of Azerbaijan with a majority of Armenian population, where a fragile ceasefire is still holding.

Security forces Saturday put at 38 the official death toll from the failed uprising, including six civilians, and said 58 people were wounded.

Anglo-U.S. tension over Adams visit persists despite Clinton's phone

LONDON (AFP) — Anglo-American tension over Northern Ireland persisted Monday despite a weekend phone call that was supposed to have patched things up between Prime Minister John Major and President Bill Clinton.

Mr. Major had made no secret of his pique over the VIP treatment accorded Gerry Adams last week during the Sinn Féin leader's U.S. tour, particularly over a visa that allowed Mr. Adams to raise funds in the United States for the Irish Republican Army (IRA).

As the British government sulked, Mr. Adams met twice with Mr. Clinton, led a St. Patrick's Day parade, attended fund-raising banquets and generally basked in the hero's welcome he received wherever he went.

In a 25-minute Sunday night phone call from Mr. Clinton, which an infuriated Major had reportedly twice refused to take, the premier told the president he was moving too quickly in welcoming Sinn Féin when the IRA had made no firm commitment to surrender its weapons, according to British sources.

Mr. Clinton used the occasion to remind Mr. Major he would be in Moscow and not in Britain for VE-Day celebrations May 6-7, but would be sending Vice President Al Gore in his stead.

Sources close to Mr. Major said he was fuming over the way Mr. Clinton had dismissed Britain's simple request to wait for a positive IRA step towards weapons decommissioning before welcoming Mr. Adams as a political leader.

"The Americans treated Major in a way that none other of his European partners would have done," said a European diplomat who asked out to be named.

White House officials sought to put an upbeat spin on the phone conversation, calling it "Positive and friendly."

Downing Street used the words "businesslike and thorough," diplo-speak for strained and testy.

It was "vital," he said, "that money should not be used to re-stock the IRA's arsenal."

Downing Street said Mr. Clinton had agreed on the need for "strict accounting for funds raised by Sinn Féin in the United States."

The White House said Mr. Clinton told Mr. Major the Ulster weapons issue had been discussed during the visit and that "we had pushed Adams on it and would continue to do so publicly and privately."

But when Mr. Adams got off the plane in Dublin Monday, he said "the (weapons) issue wasn't raised" during his U.S. trip, by Mr. Clinton or anybody else.

Furthermore, he said, he was "not aware of any move by the IRA on arms."

Russian offensive halted in Chechenya; jets continue attacks

SHALI, Russia (AFP) — Chechen fighters managed to halt a major Russian push into the southeast of the secessionist Caucasus republic, but Russian aircraft kept up the pressure Monday, firing rockets at several towns, Chechen officials and military officers said.

Chechen government spokesman Movladi Udogov told the Interfax News Agency that the Russian offensive against the main separatist strongholds in eastern Chechenya — Shali, Argun and Gudermes — had been halted Sunday by the rebels.

Russian attacks killed at least six people and wounded several dozen in the upsurge in fighting Sunday. Fifteen of the wounded were still hospitalised Monday, most of them children, medical sources said.

On Monday, Russian aircraft and artillery fired rockets at Argun and the village of Dzhalga, east of the Chechen capital, Grozny. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

But fighting between Russian and Chechen forces facing off along the front line — the Argun River between Shali and Argun — had dropped back to "normal exchanges of fire," the deputy military commander of the Shali district, Sahid-Hassan Tatayev, said.

Thousands of people have died since Russia sent troops into Chechenya in December to crush a separatist rebellion, and thousands more have fled their homes, to escape the fierce fighting.

Military officials at the Russian headquarters in

Mozdok, quoted by ITAR-TASS news agency, said Russian jets and artillery blasted Chechen armoured positions at Stariye Atagi south of Grozny and Argun.

The TASS report Monday quoted army officials at Mozdok headquarters as saying the rebels, who have been battling Russian forces since Dec. 11, now controlled only a seven kilometre strip of land up to the edge of the capital.

They said Russian forces occupied nearly the whole valley south of Grozny and had moved up significantly from the west towards Stariye Atagi.

TASS said Russian forces sustained no casualties in the clashes Monday. It gave no estimates for Chechen losses.

Russian forces, who are trying to crush resistance after moving into the north Caucasus territory to end a bid for independence, took Grozny in February after fierce fighting that has devastated the city.

The Russians say they have lost more than 1,200 men in the fighting. Russia's Human Rights Commission said last month that as many as 24,000 civilians were killed in Grozny alone in a two-month spell.

Meanwhile Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev headed to the Caucasus Republics of Georgia and Armenia Monday for a three-day visit aimed at inspecting Russian troops stationed in both countries.

Gen. Grachev was scheduled to meet with Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze and on Tuesday is to visit two Russian military bases in the country.

Mr. Grachev will then head Wednesday to Armenia where authorities recently signed a military accord calling for Russia to maintain a military base in the northern town of Gumri.

He is also expected to discuss joint military manoeuvres scheduled between both countries on March 29.

His office said Wednesday that he may decide to continue on to Tajikistan Thursday where 15,000 Russian soldiers are stationed along the border with Afghanistan, where Islamic rebels often stage cross-border attacks.



An old Chechen woman returns to destroyed Grozny, carrying her belongings. While Grozny is quiet, the Russian troops near Argun are gearing up for the decisive battle for the town, one of the bastions of the separatist Chechen forces (AFP photo)

Russian minister says Crimea is Ukraine's affair

KIEV (R) — A senior Russian minister arrived in Ukraine to iron out final details of a friendship pact and said Kiev's constitutional row with separatists in Crimea would have no effect on ties between the two countries.

Internal political events in Ukraine are Ukraine's business," said Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets told reporters after arriving at Kiev Airport.

Crimea, an autonomous region within Ukraine, and the disputed Black Sea Fleet based there are among the

remaining obstacles to conclusion of the friendship pact, first planned for last September.

The talks opened three days after Ukraine's parliament clamped down on Crimea's pro-Russian authorities at the urging of President Leonid Kuchma, abolishing its constitution and the post of Crimean president.

In Simferopol, Crimea's administrative centre, the region's ousted president remained closed in his office,

pledging to carry out his duties in defiance of orders from Kiev.

"There will be no resistance or revolt in Crimea," Yuri Meshkov told reporters. "As president I have been elected by the people of Crimea. No resolution by the Ukrainian parliament can change that."

About two-thirds of Crimea's 2.7 million residents are ethnic Russians and since the collapse of Soviet power, the peninsula's leaders have done little to conceal their

ambitions to restore Russian rule over the region.

But Russian leaders, keenly aware of Western condemnation of Moscow's own bloody campaign against separatism in Chechenya, are clearly unwilling to become involved in the Crimea issue.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Hennadiy Ushakov told reporters Mr. Kuchma had spoken by telephone to Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin. He said Moscow "views this issue with understanding."

Bosnian army offensive shatters fragile truce

SARAJEVO (R) — Muslim-led government forces shattered Bosnia's ceasefire with heavy attacks on Bosnian Serbs on two fronts Monday, U.N. and Serb forces said.

Peacekeepers reported intense fighting around Muslim-held Tuzla in northeast Bosnia where government troops attacked Serbs on a wide front.

Muslim-controlled Sarajevo Radio said the Serbs responded with an artillery attack on the U.N. protected zone around Tuzla in which several people were killed or wounded.

The Bosnian Serb Army said Muslim forces in Travnik in central Bosnia, west of Tuzla, attacked Serb positions around Mount Vlasica using infantry and artillery.

The fighting was the heaviest since the two sides began a four-month truce in January, not due to expire until May 1.

It follows a gradual build up of sniping and shelling incidents in Sarajevo which resulted in a clash Sunday between the Serbs and U.N. peacekeepers after a mortar attack on a U.N. aircraft.

Lack of diplomatic progress towards a peace settlement has prompted U.N. fears that Muslims and Serbs are preparing for a return to war in the spring once the ceasefire ends.

Monday's fighting showed the situation could deteriorate more quickly with government forces, rested and re-armed during the truce, taking the initiative against Serbs who control 70 per cent of Bosnia after three years of fighting.

The Tuzla fighting erupted along a wide arc east of the town on the front line dividing Muslim and Serb forces. A U.N. duty officer in Tuzla told Reuters by telephone there had been more than 500 detonations in the Majevica Hills outside Stolice Monday morning.

Bosnian government troop movements "well in excess of 1,000 men" were seen. "It would seem that the Bosnian army are taking some form of offensive action in that area but our freedom of movement is very limited and so is our information," U.N. spokesman Gary Coward said in Sarajevo.

One Muslim target appeared to be a Serb television transmitter at Stolice.

The Serbs reported heavy shelling and infantry battles with half a dozen towns under attack including Priboj, Jahanica and Lukavica. The Serbs made no mention of casualties and said the Muslims were being repulsed.

U.N. sources said about 60 detonations were heard in fighting after daylight in the Travnik area. Some 30 Bosnian soldiers were believed killed and 80 wounded Monday morning in Serb shelling of their barracks in Tuzla town in northeast Bosnia, as fighting flared nearby, according to initial U.N. Protection Force (UNPROFOR) reports here.

U.N. military observers in Tuzla were told that several shells had hit Bosnian army barracks during morning parade, Major Herve Gourmelon said here.

The observers confirmed that one shell had hit the parade ground. A doctor at the local hospital told the U.N. observers that some 200 casualties were admitted Monday morning to the hospital. The observers

said they had seen numerous ambulances on the streets.

The United Nations called a flight into Sarajevo Monday, apparently bowing to Bosnian Serbs who have attacked five aircraft landing at the city's airport over the past nine days.

The decision came after U.N. spokesman said Monday that the U.N. YAK-4 aircraft would land about noon.

Asked why the flight had been cancelled at the last moment a U.N. source said "The better question is why was scheduled to land in the first place."

Relief flights into the city were suspended on March 1 when Serb gunners held Red Cross plane as it touched down at the airport.

Since then only U.N. administrative flights have come into Sarajevo, carrying U.N. peacekeepers, civilian officials and their equipment.

Many of those flights have been shot at by Serbs who surround the city, including plane carrying U.N. special envoy Yasushi Akashi and his two top generals in former Yugoslavia.

gato was responsible for the ambush when a vehicle pursued a tyre.

"We condemn violence from wherever it comes but especially this kind of hit attack by this Nisigaro," I said.

"These people are going too far," Mr. Ndwaya said on state radio. "All Burundians must fight them and have the means of stopping them injuring us."

Burundi has the same volatile ethnic mix as neighbouring Rwanda, where up to a million Tutsis and all Hutus were put to death in last year's genocide.

Burundi has teetered on the brink of all-out ethnic war since 50,000 people were butchered after Tutsi soldiers killed Melchior Ndadaye, the country's first democratically elected president, in October 1993.

Hutu gunmen kill 17 in Burundi; Tutsis hit back

BUJUMBURA (R) — At least 17 people, including three Belgians, were massacred by gunmen in Burundi Sunday, sparking clashes in the capital Monday in which another four people were killed.

Witnesses said members of the Hutu majority were on Monday taken hostage in the central market.

The witnesses counted four dead after stone-throwing gangs of Tutsi and Hutu youths clashed outside the market as news of Sunday's massacre spread.

The youths ignored an appeal for peace by Prime Minister Antoine Nduwayo Monday after the massacre at Nyamutenderi, 12 kilometres southeast of Bujumbura. Police said 17 people were killed on the main road.

Security sources said Tutsi youths were heading Monday for Nyamutenderi, where

most victims were Tutsis, on a "punitive mission" in revenge for the attack blamed on Hutu gunmen.

The Belgians were a woman, her daughter and a man. His fiancée was among three Belgian wounded taken to hospital. The names of the dead were withheld until families were informed.

In Brussels, the Foreign Ministry condemned the killings and a spokesman appealed to the 850 Belgians living in Burundi to take extra security measures.

He said the ambush took place at about 7.30 p.m. (1730 GMT) Sunday, half an hour after a curfew in Bujumbura began.

"They were travelling back from a sports meeting outside the capital when apparently they had tyre problems and had to stop. An armed group then attacked them," the

spokesman said.

The Foreign Ministry did not intend warning people against travelling to Burundi, a former Belgian protectorate. No evacuation plan was being prepared, the spokesman said.

"We are looking at this as an isolated incident. Burundi nationals were with the Belgians so we do not think the attack was targeted at Belgians," he added.

An Austrian friend of the victims, who was travelling in convoy with the group, said he did not believe whites were targeted. "They were shooting at all the cars," he said.

"It was an ambush... it was one of the armed gangs who are in all the hills," he told Belgian RTBF Radio.

U.N. special envoy Ahmedou Ould Abdallah told Reuters an armed Hutu group led by "General" Donatien Nisigaro was responsible for the ambush when a vehicle pursued a tyre.

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Editorial and advertising offices:
 Jordan Press Foundation,
 University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.
 Telephones: 667171/6, 670141-4
 Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO
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End explosive situation

THE ATTACK Sunday on a bus carrying Israeli settlers near Hebron in the occupied Arab territories is a strong reminder of the settlements' crisis within the West Bank and Gaza Strip. At a time when the Israeli government of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has moved expeditiously to separate Israel from the Palestinian territories in every conceivable way, it has done nothing concrete to limit the mushrooming settlements in those territories. Mr. Rabin and his government have decided to separate Israel from the Palestinian lands after considerable soul-searching and after becoming convinced that there was no viable way to keep the two peoples and their territories intertwined. If the premise behind the separation between the Israelis and Palestinians is a sound one, it follows that there must be an equal separation between the Palestinians and the settlers. However, there can be no better way to attain this except by dismantling the Jewish colonies. As long as Israeli settlements are being built and expanded right in the heart of Arab lands, there will always be an occasion for violence to erupt in one way or another. One year ago, an Israeli settler struck at the Al Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron and slaughtered more than 30 worshippers. There were many reasons behind that mass killing of Palestinians but the most outstanding among them is the proximity between the two peoples at a time when emotions on both sides of the fence run very high. The logical thing to do against this backdrop is to end this explosive mixing especially since the two peoples seem to prefer to lead two separate lives in every sense of the word, which would lead to an end to the attacks and counter-attacks and enhance peace building.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

UL RA'I Arabic daily on Monday dealt with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl's visit to Jordan next June, and Jordanian-German relations. The newspaper said its Majesty King Hussein has a special status in the hearts of the German people because of his distinguished leadership. Every visit King Hussein or His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan pay to Germany is met with special interest and concern. That is why Prime Minister of the German State of North Rhine-Westphalia Johannes Rau's visit to Jordan was warmly welcomed and was an affirmation of the special relationships between the Jordanian and German leaderships and peoples. Germany and the German people were always an example of real challenge and their ability to unify the two German parts was legendary.

L DUSTOUR Arabic daily denounced in its editorial paragraphs launched in the American Senate to move the embassy of the U.S. from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, saying such a move would harm the Middle East peace process, loving the embassy to Jerusalem, said the paper, convenes all international legitimacy resolutions and the 'inciples of justice and the comprehensive and lasting peace sought by all Arab peace-loving parties. It said this spurious campaign was aiming to start cracks in the peace process which is already facing failures as a result of Israel's and rejecting the establishment of lasting peace on all fronts, particularly its rejection to implement the 11-rule agreements with the Palestinians and its stubborn rejection to withdraw from the Golan Heights and Lebanese lands in accordance with U.N. Security Council resolution 425.

The View from Fourth Circle

Slaying our own dragons

By Rami G. Khouri

WHICH MINISTRY in Jordan can potentially have the greatest impact on the future wellbeing of the country? Water? Education? Economy? All of these are important, but I would suggest that the single most important ministry in Jordan today is the new, small and intriguing Ministry of Administrative Development.

Typically, the government appointed to this post a minister — Mohammed Toq — who had no experience in or expert knowledge of administrative affairs. Yet, it probably did a good thing. I do not often or lightly praise Arab governments, but in this case the sheer bravado, audacity and courage that the prime minister and his cabinet have shown in tackling administrative reform need to be recognised and supported.

I say this because I believe that the single biggest constraint to Jordan's ability to meet the challenges of the future may be the bloated Jordanian government itself. The steady decline in the quality of the public service in the last two decades has been as frightening and damaging as it has been conspicuous. Anyone who routinely comes into contact with the bureaucracy knows the frustration of having to deal with people who are, with some exceptions, underpaid, underworked, undermotivated, gruff, inefficient, or a combination of several of the above attributes. The efficient, polite and enthusiastic Jordanian bureaucrat is an increasingly rare species.

The problem is not in the nature of Jordanians or of bureaucracy, for Jordanians are naturally kind and hard working, and bureaucracies can be efficient and humane. The predicament is that the exaggerated growth of the public bureaucracy in modern Jordan has been a central political and economic problem that has seen the governance system deteriorate. The situation today is very clear: The government cannot continue to finance a bloated bureaucracy, the country cannot afford to have so many workers in unproductive jobs, and our future will be stunted if we continue to endure a public service that is unable to provide the quality of regulation and supervision required to succeed in the more dynamic era of privatisation and globalisation.

The available data shows that all the employees of the public service (civil service, security services and parastatal institutions such as the national airline or the universities) employ something like 175,000 people (nobody can tell you the precise number because nobody knows the precise number). This accounts for around 36 per cent of the entire workforce in Jordan; the civil service alone, without security personnel or parastatals, accounts for 18 per cent of the workforce. These are very high ratios that are unsustainable, since the government cannot shoulder the financial burden of employing so many people who bring in very little if any revenue, and the natural social and economic dynamism of Jordan cannot withstand the continued dampening effect of unchecked bureaucratic confusion.

The government's attempt to tackle this problem is an important sign of Jordan's desire to move from the fantasy world of the Third World school of governance to the more

demanding and real world of progress based on ingenuity, productivity and human enthusiasm. Dr. Toq and his small staff have gotten off to a good start — their outline report about their goals and procedures is exactly 10 pages (with lots of white space and wide margins; actually, it is around six pages long).

The most impressive thing about their approach to the task at hand is not their creativity or complex scholarly analyses; it is the simple fact that they have brought a lot of common sense to bear upon a most frightening problem. They speak the revolutionary language of improving quality of performance, putting the right person in the right job, increasing efficiency and productivity, reducing red tape, introducing principles of accountability and reward-and-punishment, choosing people well and training them continuously, transparency, quality circles, one-stop windows, and other such concepts that have long haunted but rarely touched the Jordanian bureaucracy.

I am convinced that this is a serious attempt by the government to solve problems of its own historical creation, to slay dragons that it gave birth to and nurtured over many decades. The government is not doing this out of its own altruism or good nature. The government is doing it because it obviously woke up recently and realised that it was on the verge of becoming embarrassingly non-credible to most of its own citizens. Left to its own legacy, the public service was on the verge of becoming a joke, riddled with inefficiency, savaged by corruption, and threatened with irrelevance. (We see all around us many instances of people turning away from government services and using private or foreign services instead, such as in the fields of education, health and television and radio news).

The Ministry of Administrative Development says it seeks to implement a broad reform programme that honours a simple but crucial principle: Government employees are public servants who should be held accountable to the best interests of the public they serve. This is, in effect, an attempt to apply to the bureaucracy the same principles of democratic participation and accountability that we are trying to apply to the political system.

This is by nature a very long-term process that requires a total change of attitude among government employees, but it has already started. The Ministry of Finance has instituted some impressive new procedures during the past few years that have considerably reduced paperwork and increased efficiency.

For example, retired government employees now need only about 10 days to complete the paperwork necessary to get their retirement benefits, compared to an average of 40 days previously. Routine formalities that used to require eight signatures now can be completed with just three signatures. The last three ministers of finance have delegated to lower levels of the bureaucracy a total of 138 different responsibilities that they used to have. The Ministry of Interior has instituted similar efficiency measures that now allow a citizen to process a routine request by going to a single window, instead of having to make the

rounds of 10 or more offices. The Passport Department now issues a new passport by 1 p.m. if the request is presented by 10 a.m. of the same day.

These are significant if isolated examples of intelligent rationalisation of a once byzantine and wasteful bureaucracy. The challenge is to institute such changes across the board, and to institutionalise them throughout the entire bureaucracy. The process will take years and decades, and it will never stop. Many in the system may want to fight this process, because it may reduce their powers or diminish their capacity to employ friends and cousins in jobs that perpetuate the public's perception of the civil service as a cash cow to be milked indefinitely.

Many others, though, recognise the importance of what is being attempted by Dr. Toq and his colleagues. He reported that the overwhelming majority of senior civil servants are receiving his ideas with enthusiasm. They do so, I suspect, because they recognise that effective administrative reform, as well as being good for the public and the country, will also enhance their own sense of worth and self-esteem.

The importance of this effort cannot be over-emphasised. If it succeeds, it will reinvigorate the partnership between the public and private sectors that has always been a key to Jordan's modern national development. It should also gradually reduce the problems of corruption and mismanagement that the prime minister himself has mentioned as fundamental targets of his government.

This is, in the final analysis, a political process, and not only an administrative one. It is about restructuring the Jordanian governance system in a manner that decentralises power and shares it between the public and private sectors, and between the central government and the provinces. If it succeeds, it will gradually redress the severe distortions in the use of political and economic power that have plagued most modern Arab countries.

The process of state-building may have required a centralisation of power in the hands of a small number of officials who were not subjected to the accountability of their own people; today's challenges of sustaining and further improving the conditions of the Jordanian people, however, require a rolling back of this outdated legacy. The fact that such an endeavour is being spearheaded by sensible folks, wielding the power of brief and succinct action plans, is a profoundly important and positive political statement about the nature and aspirations of our people and our modern political culture. It is important for the government not to make the same mistake with this process that it has made with others; it should actively explain what this is all about, draw on the ideas, enthusiasm and common sense of the Jordanian people, and engage the public in a political and administrative reform process that is vital for our collective future wellbeing. The initial efforts have been serious, thoughtful and impressive, and the government — our employees, in effect — deserves credit for its efforts to date in this respect.



A chance for Croats and Serbs to avert approaching explosion

By Misha Glenny

SALONIKA, Greece — The Clinton administration has persuaded Croatian President Franjo Tudjman to retreat from a course of action that might have led to full-scale war with Serbia. War still cannot be ruled out.

A lot depends both on the rebel Serbian minority that rules one-third of Croatia, a region called Krajina, and on the president of Serbia, Slobodan Milosevic.

The immediate threat was defused when the international community, but particularly the U.S. State Department, got Mr. Tudjman to rescind his decision to evict 12,500 United Nations peacekeepers who monitor the so-called zone of separation between Krajina and the rest of Croatia.

Even so, Mr. Tudjman insists on a reduction from 12,500 troops to 5,000 — and, crucially, that the 5,000 patrol not only the zone of separation but also Krajina's borders with Bosnia and Serbia to try to prevent Serbs in those countries from giving the Krajina Serbs military support.

The United Nations worries about its ability to perform both tasks with reduced personnel.

The Serbs in Kain, the Krajina "capital," and in Belgrade are debating whether to accept any change in the mandate. If the Serbs in Kain don't want the international borders patrolled because they want to interfere with military supplies, Mr. Tudjman might well insist that

all 12,500 peacekeepers leave. Then both armies would grab for strategic points along this 1,100-kilometre line. The Croats would make substantial gains. Belgrade would be under overwhelming domestic pressure to send troops to support the Krajina Serbs.

The front line between the armies has been stable since the plan that created the U.N. presence was signed in 1991 by Zagreb, Kain and Belgrade.

Croatia now claims that the U.N. force is consolidating the status quo. Croatia's impatience is understandable. Part of Krajina cuts the main railway link between Zagreb and the Dalmatian coast, whose tourist industry is potentially Croatia's largest foreign currency earner.

Also, Croatia's delicate economy has to sustain almost half a million refugees, many of whom were driven out of the Serbian-held area. Unable to return home, they represent an influential and angry constituency in Croatia.

Zagreb is guilty of misrepresentation when it claims that the United Nations has made no progress in helping to reintegrate the Krajina region into Croatia.

Mr. Tudjman's move to end the U.N. mandate came after Kain and Zagreb signed an economic agreement in December following U.N.-sponsored negotiations. The pact enabled Croatian drivers to use their country's main highway, which has been closed for almost four years where it crosses the Serbian-held territory. The

agreement also opened a pipeline.

Real progress was being made towards the start of political negotiations on the status of the rebel Serbs when Mr. Tudjman surprised everybody by ordering the United Nations out. This was evidently a tactic to deflect attention from the crisis in Bosnia and focus it on Zagreb's frustrations.

By backing down from this cynically manufactured crisis, Mr. Tudjman got his pay-off — promises of Western economic support.

Recently, Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel of Germany said that now that Croatia has allowed the United Nations to stay, the peaceful reintegration of the Krajina region must be accelerated. To make that possible, he asked Mr. Milosevic to recognise Croatia.

The West has already told Mr. Milosevic that if he recognises Croatia and Bosnia, U.N. economic sanctions against the rump Yugoslavia imposed in 1992 will be lifted. This is nice idea, but it will not work.

Mr. Milosevic argues that he can consider recognition only if the sanctions, which have made life miserable for ordinary Serbs, are first lifted. This would enable him to appease his restless domestic constituency.

There is a way out of the impasse. The U.N. Security Council should suspend the sanctions for a limited time. Any permanent member of the council could insist on reimposing them if Mr. Milosevic was unable or unwilling to deliver on his promises.

Suspension would allow him to demonstrate to his own population that talks, not war, provide the best solution to the crisis that has made a mess of all of the former Yugoslavia — except Slovenia. Without a suspension of sanctions, any appeal to Mr. Milosevic to recognise Croatia and Bosnia will fall on deaf ears.

Sanctions aside, his position on the Krajina region is clear. Zagreb and Kain must arrive at a political solution that defines the special rights and status of the Serbs who would remain in Croatia. Once this happened, he would recognise Croatia.

So even if the Serbs in Kain and in Belgrade agree on a change in the U.N. mandate, Zagreb will still have to negotiate with Kain if it wants to avoid the use of force in getting Krajina back.

The U.S. ambassador to Croatia, Peter Galbraith, has come up with a document that the international community thinks should be the basis for negotiations. It envisions a return of Krajina while giving the Serbs special status.

The Croats have doubts. But both they and the Serbs should use the offices of Mr. Galbraith and other mediators to explore the opportunities for a settlement. Anything else could lead to an explosion in the northern Balkans.

The writer, author of "The Fall of Yugoslavia" and now preparing a book on Balkan nationalism since 1804, contributed this comment to The New York Times.

Peru, Ecuador likely to enter arms race

By Mary Powers
 Reuter

LIMA — Peru and Ecuador, who fought a month-long border war during which neither side gained a decisive victory, are likely to enter an arms race to prepare for another eventual conflict, military analysts here said.

Enrique Obando, analyst at the Peruvian Centre for International Studies, said that in the aftermath of a peace accord, Quito is likely to continue arguing that a border treaty, which Peru has tried to implement for 50 years, cannot be executed in a stretch of the Cordillera del Condor where the war occurred.

"The most logical outcome of such a diplomatic standoff is that the two countries enter into an arms race," he said.

Luis Meller, a former navy intelligence officer, predicted another round of the conflict will break out later this year.

"Ecuador is gaining time (with the diplomatic accord) but so is Peru. I predict another confrontation around September," Mr. Meller told Reuters, adding that Ecuador's "national mission" is to gain access to the Amazon either through diplomacy or arms.

The conflict, in which at least 75 Ecuadorians and Peruvians died, broke out in late January in rugged terrain in the Cordillera del Condor, which is yet to be demarcated as called for in the treaty.

The two countries signed a peace accord on Feb. 17 and, with the mediation of four countries who act as guarantors of the treaty, a ceasefire has largely been respected since by both sides ratified it on Feb. 28.

About 40 military observers from those nations — Argentina, Brazil, Chile and the United States — have been in Peru and Ecuador since March 11 to supervise a separation of force and eventual demilitarisation of the zone called for in the accord.

But the appearance of two arms shipments indicate one or both sides may

be gearing up for another conflict.

President Carlos Menem Saturday ordered a formal investigation into the sale of a 75-tonne shipment of Argentine-made arms, worth some \$33 million, which arrived in Guayaquil in February after the peace accord was signed.

The Argentine newspaper Clarin, which first broke the story, quoted official documents as saying the arms were destined for Venezuela, but Caracas has denied it ever bought the arms.

In Lisbon Friday, Portuguese officials said a Ukrainian plane was sent back to Slovakia, where its flight had begun, after a search revealed it was carrying arms instead of medical goods as indicated in the cargo manifest.

An air force spokesman said the plane's original flight plan was for Quito but that it had tried to change it. Diplomats said the plane was trying to deliver arms to Ecuador or Peru.

In the war, Mr. Obando and Mr. Meller said, Peru had a more realistic estimate of Ecuador's military capability — Ecuador chose a site for the fighting that would give it a clear strategic advantage and obtained the arms necessary to defend itself.

"Although on paper Peru's military hardware is superior to Ecuador's, most of Peru's armament is old and obsolete," Mr. Obando said.

Peru, which made tactical errors in the air war and lacked intelligence information about the arms had radar which Ecuador possessed, lost eight aircraft — three fighter-bombers and five helicopters — knocked out by Ecuadorian missiles.

But Ecuador also misjudged Peru's capability to put most of its aircraft in operation in a relatively short period of time. Peru dislodged troops from two of three bases and had surrounded a third when the accord was signed.

"Both sides calculated badly and now they are prisoners of their poor calculations," Mr. Obando said.

Bitter harvest on the steppes

10 years ago, a surge of pride overtook Mikhail Gorbachev's village when he was named general secretary of the USSR. These days, his image is somewhat tarnished. Andrew Higgins reports

PRIVOLNOYE — It was with a tinge of pride that, on March 11, 1985, Alexander Yakovenko heard the thrilling news from Moscow on his radio — an antique contraption bulkier than a suitcase. His old boyhood friend, the village over-achiever with whom he spent his teenage summers harvesting grain on a clunking Stalinist-6 combine, had just been named General Secretary of the Communist Party of the USSR.

Not only had Mr. Yakovenko once sat alongside the newly appointed master of the world's second superpower, he could claim a modest role in his making. For it was thanks to their Stakhanovite teamwork aboard the combine harvester that, in the June 20, 1948 issue of the local newspaper, *The Road to Il'yich*, the man who would sow the seeds of perestroika and reap a whirlwind of change first hit the headlines: "Comrade Gorbachev is Ready to Harvest."

Today, 10 years after the Politburo declared Mikhail Gorbachev ready to govern the Soviet Union, Mr. Yakovenko, and nearly everyone else in the village where Mr. Gorbachev spent his youth, bemoan the bitter harvest of the past decade. "Somehow it just didn't work out," the old radio on which he once followed Mr. Gorbachev's career boomed away in the next room. Above the throb of heavy metal rock music, Mr. Yakovenko explained why his friend's good intentions had gone away. "This glasnost and democracy business were a crime. They may have killed off perestroika."

Along a nearby main road to the regional capital, Stavropol, rumbled forbidding reminders of the chaos many Russians see as the principal results of the past decade — convoys of military trucks emblazoned with red crosses heading south to the war in neighbouring Chechnya.

Never mind that Mr. Gorbachev opposed the war and has been out of office since 1991, there is a sense that he somehow set the whole infernal machine in motion: "He should have done things differently. Something needed to be done but not like this," said Tatyana Pavlenka, a 55-year-old farmworker. "He should have thought about things a bit more. He did it all without really thinking."

FALLING STARS: Gorbachev with Margaret Thatcher in 1989; at President Chernomir's funeral in 1985; that fateful flight back from the Crimea in August, 1991; on the phone with President Bush minutes before announcing his resignation in December, 1991



Mr. Gorbachev, whose first move upon coming to office was a frenzied campaign against drunkenness, would himself be less than pleased with the most visible signs of change in his home village — a huge selection of booze. A new shop off the main square stocks Black Death Vodka and Bulgarian cognac; the state store next door offers stale biscuits and shelf after shelf of fortified wine; private kiosks on Proletariat Street sell ice-cream, imported chocolate and more alcohol.

Built on the banks of a muddy river, the Yegorlyk, the village of Privolnoye sits on some of the richest land in Russia, the gently rolling steppes of the Stavropol region. For all the grumbling, it still presents a tidy, even prosperous face, the shutters of its gingerbread houses freshly painted, each home surrounded by a neat wooden fence. Unlike many Russian villages, it has an asphalt road and its own telephone exchange.

Nor is the village swamped by the crime that has so alienated urban Rus-

sians: the most recent act of lawlessness was the theft of two turkeys.

According to Vasily Chertov, head of the village administration, the real problem is less present misery than fear for the future and resentment that staff at a gas compressor station just outside the village should earn at least five times more than peasants on the collective farm. "We have no idea anymore where we are going or how we will get there. It was easy before. We were building Communism. No one

had to think. Now we have no ideology."

An educated man who used to work as a vet on the collective farm, Mr. Chertov has a soft spot for Mr. Gorbachev but sees no hope of a political comeback for the village's most celebrated son. "He doesn't stand a chance."

A far more promising, albeit problematic — he died in 1982 — candidate for a comeback would be Leonid Brezhnev. "Brezhnev would definitely win. Here it would be 100 per cent for Brezhnev. There is

no question at all."

In some way, though, little has changed since Mr. Gorbachev left here in 1950 to go to university in Moscow. The centre of village life is still the Sverdlov Collective Farm — recently renamed a Joint-Stock Agricultural Enterprise Ltd but still run much as before from a wooden building flanked by concrete busts of Lenin and Marx. The land has been divided up on paper into 1,700 individual plots but only 34 out of more than 4,000 villagers have broken with the col-

lective farm to set up on their own. The farm's director is Nikolai Brizhakin, a jowly veteran communist with huge ham hands, a stubby tie and horseshoe stains on his polyester shirt.

"Reform has given practically nothing to the peasants," he complained, launching into a long tirade against Moscow's neglect of the countryside.

Equally distressed is Mr. Gorbachev's old German teacher, the ethnic German woman who first introduced the future leader of the Communist Party to the

works of Marx. Engel Rosa Luxemburg, K Liebknecht and other luminaries of the socialist cause. "Nothing good has come of it," said Matill Ignatenko of her form pupil's perestroika. "I hope at least we could be that things might get better. Now we see no prospect of a future."

"There is no certainty. Before we knew what tomorrow would bring when salaries and pensions would be paid."

All the same, she remembers Mr. Gorbachev fondly. He was one of few people in the village she said, not swept away post-war hysteria against things German.

And, thanks to his time in the Kremlin, she no longer worries about talking openly about what happened to her own father. He was shot in 1937 at very height of Stalin purges. "I carried this my life. I was the daughter of an enemy of the people. Before that I could not anyone who my father was."

So far, the only tribute to Mr. Gorbachev is a small stone plaque on outside wall of a dacha house on School U where his mother used to live. It was put there by a pop star who befriended the former leader's mother convinced her to sell the house and turned property into a bizarre treat for leather-jacketed groupies.

Furious at the desecration of his family home, Gorbachev protested transaction in the court and, after months of a haggling, finally got property back in January.

Mr. Razin, lead singer of a band called Tender, responded by ripping the kitchen cabinets, seizing Mr. Gorbachev's family memorabilia.

Back in Privolnoye week to plot his next move. Mr. Razin boasted of he would one day get house back and turn it a museum — of Mr. Gorbachev's failures.

"Everything is falling apart. He destroyed everything. I rate him very low as a politician and as a man. Maybe he was as a combine harvester or but that is it."

Few would grant baby-faced Mr. Razin that. And, for all its news, the feud between pop star and the former general secretary of the Communist Party stands as an odd perhaps fitting tribute just how much Mr. Gorbachev changed his country.

The Independent

Assad demands 'balanced peace'

(Continued from page 1)

lier that he was in Damascus to familiarise himself with Syria's views on the peace effort.

"We in Europe in general, and in Germany in particular, are greatly interested in the positive developments in the peace process," Mr. Rau said.

Diplomatic sources said that Mr. Rau's visit signalled Germany's growing interest in playing a bigger role in the Middle East.

Syria and other Arab states have long encouraged Europe to take a higher profile in the process, seeking to counter U.S. support for Israel.

Mr. Assad also met Monday with Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Bouez to discuss the peace process and

other regional issues.

Syria is the dominant power in Lebanon, whose negotiations with Israel have also been stalled since February 1994.

SANA said that Mr. Bouez had carried a message from Lebanese President Elias Hrawi for Mr. Assad. It did not disclose the contents.

Mr. Bouez, who arrived by road from Beirut, also met his Syrian counterpart, Farouk Al Sharaa. He said they discussed developments in the Middle East in light of Mr. Christopher's tour of the region last week.

He said that Lebanon was mobilising its diplomacy and international relations to explain the brutality of Israel's aggression on Lebanon.

Jordan rejects Israeli charges

(Continued from page 1)

daily quota of 600 across that crossing was completed.

The Jerusalem Post quoted tour operators as saying that many of those turned back had visas issued by Jordanian authorities and some of the tourists threatened to sue the agencies.

But, Mr. Khatib said, Israeli tour operators did not take into consideration that the visas specified the period of visit and stipulated that tourists should cross into the country on the same date as mentioned in the permit rather than trying to use the permit on any day during the specified period.

Jordan is now issuing visas specifying the date of entry and the period of visit in order to preempt Israelis from misusing the permit, he

said, implicitly suggesting that Israeli tour operators were partly to be blamed for not explaining the situation to tourists.

"We think 900 per day is a good number, particularly in view of the limitations on our facilities to cater to the needs of tourists," Mr. Khatib said. The minister said it was not possible for Jordan to increase the number, given that it did not even have the properly equipped buses that meet the requirements of tourism standards to transport the visitors.

Furthermore, he said, Jordanian facilities — hotels, and tourism sites as well as tour agencies — could not overlook "their regular flow of tourists from other parts of the world."

Israel debates separation

(Continued from page 1)

the talks would continue. A leading dove in Mr. Rabin's government, Environment Minister Yossi Sarid, said Monday it was only a matter of time until Jewish settlements in the West Bank would be uprooted.

"It is known that the settlements and of course that in the centre of Hebron will meet their fate, and before much more time will pass..." Mr. Sarid told Israel TV.

However, Deputy Defence Minister Mordechai Gur said the government would push for the "right" of Jews to remain in Hebron under a final peace agreement with the Palestinians.

Sunday night's shooting ambush lent new intensity to a debate in Israel over plans to separate between Israel and the West Bank with the help of fences, beefed-up army patrols, new checkpoints and bomb-sniffing dogs.

Police Minister Moshe Shahal on Monday presented the proposal to a parliamentary committee and said it was the only way to foil attacks by Palestinian militants inside Israel. Mr. Shahal said he would submit the plan to the government in two weeks for approval.

Right-wing politicians, however, said this would turn the 140,000 Jews in the West Bank into targets for militants.

"It's not enough to put up a fence. The question is who controls security on the other side of the fence," said opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu. "If it's Hamas or the PLO, then we will have an explosion of terrorism."

Mr. Shahal said his plan consisted of a "security area" along the West Bank, though not necessarily at the pre-1967 Middle East war border. He said the zone would be flexible. Declaring it a closed

Arabs lands. "It has a political meaning," Mr. Shahal told reporters after presenting the plan for creating a "security area" between Israel and the West Bank to parliament's interior committee.

Mr. Rabin reviewed the plan on Friday. It will be brought to the cabinet for debate in two weeks. The government first adopted the idea of separation in January after a suicide bomb killed 21 Israelis.

"It is defining that there are two entities. This is the reason why those who had a policy of annexation, are dreaming of a greater Israel, object to this idea. They oppose it because this will mean this is a dream and it cannot be realised."

But Mr. Shahal, striking a different tone to comments on Saturday by Mr. Sarid, denied his plan was a first step toward creating a Palestinian state.

Mr. Shahal said his plan consisted of a "security area" along the West Bank, though not necessarily at the pre-1967 Middle East war border. He said the zone would be flexible. Declaring it a closed

military area was under consideration, he said.

"It is all along the West Bank. It is not a line. It is a zone," he said. There is already an electronic security fence and security road between Israel and the Gaza Strip.

Only at points impossible to secure by other means would fences be built, said the police minister.

Critics said the separation plan would pave the way for the eventual establishment of a Palestinian state.

"If you're looking for a Palestinian state, then the separation plan will achieve it. You will fail to prevent terrorism and waste a lot of money in the process," said Rehavam Zeevi, leader of the far-right Moleket party.

As part of the plan, police plan to put homing devices to track Arab cars and to patrol the buffer zone with helicopters, advanced electronic sensors and attack dogs trained to sniff out explosives.

Mr. Shahal said police were also weighing stiff penalties for those caught giving rides to Palestinians without permits into Israel, such as confiscating their cars.

Jordanians split over contacts

(Continued from page 12)

But little has changed in the region to strengthen advocates of normalisation.

Israel's 1993 peace deal with the Palestinians is almost a year behind schedule and, although U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's latest visit seemed a resumption of direct Israeli-Syrian peace talks, wide differences remain.

The state has taken a hard line, barring fiery preachers from mosques, banning anti-peace rallies

and demonstrations, and taking several leftist newspaper editors to court.

It says the professional associations' ban on contacts is illegal because it violates the spirit of the treaty that became law when Parliament endorsed it last November.

But the government does not want to push too hard in a society where many of Jordan's four million people are of Palestinian origin and still see Israel as occupying their land.

Turkish forces push into Iraq

(Continued from page 1)

of the operation to the multinational force, based at Incirlik air base in southern Turkey, which is charged with protecting the safe zone.

The Turkish foreign ministry said leaders of the two rival Kurdish groups fighting against the Iraqi regime, and against each other, had been informed of the offensive.

But it said Turkey had no intention of taking sides in fighting between the two groups, the KDP of Massoud Barzani, and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan of Jalal Talabani.

It was the biggest Turkish military offensive against the PKK since 1992, when almost 2,500 rebels were killed.

The push into Iraq by the

army, which has a powerful position in Turkish politics, also followed a week of political unrest in Istanbul involving moderate Alawite Muslims and trouble in Germany, where police suspect PKK separatists are behind a wave of firebomb attacks against Turkish-owned property in that country.

Turkey has repeatedly warned Iraqi Kurds against giving shelter to PKK rebels. The Turkish military has carried out several air and land raids against PKK camps in the region that Ankara says are used for cross-border raids. In early March, Turkish troop movements were spotted in the border region with northern Iraq.

Qatar to base equipment — Perry

(Continued from page 12)

in the 1991 Gulf war ceasefire.

The communique made no mention of recent urgings by Qatar and Oman to ease the sanctions on Iraq to alleviate the suffering of its 18 million people.

The ministers instead blamed the Iraqi regime for the hardships being endured by Iraqis, pointing to Baghdad's refusal to accept a U.N. offer for a one-time sale of Iraqi oil worth \$1.6 billion to help provide badly needed

food and medicine.

The communique expressed "deep regret" over Iran's failure to accept the UAE's call for the peaceful settlement of the dispute over three islands in the Gulf and its readiness to take the issue to the World Court.

The ministers are expected in Cairo for a meeting of the 22-member Arab League Council and a separate session with their leading Arab allies, Egypt and Syria.

Israel seen to reimpose siege

(Continued from page 1)

from its South Lebanon occupation zone, but Lebanon refused.

Fishermen in Tyre demanded energetic action by Beirut to end the blockade. "The blockade is now tougher than before as now we don't even venture more than half a kilometre into the

sea," said Joseph Shaqra, a 42-year-old fisherman with five children.

"We are frightened now and wish the Lebanese government would make contacts with western countries because our situation has worsened... it must move on all levels," he said.

Ali Mahdi ready to meet Aideed

MOGADISHU (AP) — North Mogadishu warlord Ali Mahdi Mohammed was ready to talk to his rival south of the capital, Mr. Aidid.

Mr. Aidid said he was ready to meet Mr. Mahdi, but if it promises to be a discussion.

An Aideed appointee said a week ago that faction leaders would meet Monday at Mogadishu's reopened under the U.N. troops on March 19.

Mr. Ali Mahdi told conference on Saturday, however, that he was aware of any date for meeting.

"I am ready to General Aideed at a meeting, but this must be fruitful discussion," he said.

"We have signed agreements together none of them has been implemented," Mr. Ali noted.

Meanwhile, delegations of Somali from Fomet Gen. Aideed as a new initiative to broker a peace deal.

Pro-Aideed radio on Sunday that the delegation, led by Mohammed Hassan (delivered a letter Ethiopia's President Zewadi to Gen. Aideed called on him for

The delegation was met Mr. Ali Mahdi on day.

It has already met in factions in the north port of Bosaso a breakaway northern group known as Somali

Business Daily Beat

A review of economic news from the Arabic press

CBJ clears way for setting up new bank for exports

THE CENTRAL Bank of Jordan (CBJ) agreed to license a new specialised bank to be called "Export and Finance Bank." The new bank, which will focus on encouraging and financing exports, will have a JD 20 million capital with half of the equity covered by the founders. The CBJ approval was conditional upon the founders pledging to keep their investments for no less than three years and upon the public sector and public institutions holding another portion, that should not be less than 20 per cent, of the capital.

The founding committee includes: Dr. Ziyad Mohammad Fariz, Mohammad Saleh Al Hourani, Ali Khaldoun Al Housari and Elia Costandi Noqui. Other key founders are: Dar Al Hikma for Investment, the Jordan Loan Guarantee Company, the Middle East Insurance, Jordan-French Insurance, the Jordao Wood Industries (JWICO), Suhail Muasher Company, Jordan Insurance, the United Industries Company and other economic bodies.

According to studies done on the export sector, only 50 big exporters are benefiting from the special export facilities provided by the Central Bank and the commercial banks whereas there are over 600 Jordanian exporters in the Kingdom. A further indication to the need for an export bank was cited in the figures of the Industrial Development Bank (IDB) which showed that the IDB had only extended JD 26 million in credits for exports in 1992. The figure was translated to be "in no way" corresponding to the overall required level (Al Aswag).

A NUMBER of former members of Parliament submitted a memorandum to the speaker of the House requesting him to obtain a pension increase for them similar to that given to retired civil and military personnel. They said they did not have a chance to get a "minister pension" and were not able to return to their seats in Parliament and, as such, would like to benefit from His Majesty's gesture of a pension raise (Al Dastour).

THE TELECOM-MUNICATIONS Corporation decided to lower charges on international telephone calls made on official public holidays. The lower charges, which will cover the whole day, will be the same as those charged during night hours. Effective April 1, the public holidays comprise: Labour Day (May 1), Independence Day (May 25), Army Day (June 10), the King's Accession to the Throne (Aug. 11) and the King's birthday (Nov. 14) (Al Ra'i).

A ROYAL Decree approved an amendment to the insurance law under which foreign companies wishing to operate in Jordan must provide a deposit to guarantee its honouring of obligations before starting business. The deposit for the foreign company must be at least double the deposit of a local company (Al Aswag).

THE BOARD of directors of the Arab Bank PLC is recommending to the general assembly the distribution of JD 15.4 million in dividends or 35 per cent at a rate of JD 3.5 per share. The Arab Bank Group recorded a JD 141.2 million net profit last year whereas the net profit of the Arab Bank PLC amounted to JD 70.5 million, 18.5 per cent above the 1993 net profit. The Arab Bank Group had total assets of JD 20,470 million whereas the assets of Arab Bank PLC stood at JD 11,232 million at the end of year (Al Dastour).

UAE banks make record profits in 1994

ABU DHABI (AFP) — United Arab Emirates (UAE) banks made record profits in 1994 due to a surge in credits to trade and other sectors and an increase in interest rates, the central bank said. Net profits by the Gulf state's 47 commercial banks soared by 17.8 per cent to around 2.31 billion dirhams (\$629 million) from 1.96 billion dirhams (\$534 million), the bank said in a statement. Central bank officials said the increase was due to a large rise in credits and higher interest rates on the U.S. dollar.

financial position under central bank instructions to boost capital and bring them in line with international adequacy standards," one official said. The instructions stipulated the 19 national banks and 28 foreign units must increase their capital to reach a minimum adequacy of 10 per cent, higher than the eight per cent floor set by the Bank for International Settlement (BIS). The guidelines for banks worldwide, outlined by the BIS's Basic Committee, were designed to ensure all banks have enough funds to deal with any crisis.

At least six UAE banks have boosted their capital to upgrade adequacy, the ratio between shareholders equity and assets. Other banks are planning to follow suit as the instructions also set a ceiling on lending. The increases boosted the combined shareholders equity, which includes the capital and provisions, to 18.3 billion dirhams (\$4.98 billion) at the end of 1994 from 15.9 billion dirhams (\$4.33 billion) at the end of 1993, according to the central bank statement. Credits rose to 72.5 billion dirhams (\$19.7 billion) from 63.4 billion dirhams (\$17.2 billion) and deposits to 105.9 billion dirhams (\$28.8 billion) from 100.5 billion dirhams (\$27.38 billion). This boosted

overall assets to 145.5 billion dirhams (\$39.6 billion) from around 138.2 billion dirhams (\$37.6 billion). Bankers said trade and construction benefited most from the credits extended during 1994 as they have remained the fastest growing sectors. They noted that the two sectors accounted for nearly 45 per cent of the total loans. "Most banks have made record earnings over the past three years due to an upsurge in credits, their main activity. They are expected to perform even better this year as indications point to continued upturn in the trade and building sectors in the region," a UAE bank manager told AFP.

"Another reason is that the interest rates on the U.S. dollars increased sharply last year. This benefited many banks as a large part of their assets are based abroad, mainly in bank deposits," he added. The statement said the central bank board approved applications by some international banks and financial institutions to open representative offices in the UAE. It did not name them but bankers said most of them were Western. The bank has a policy of halting licences for full branches by new foreign banks on the ground that the UAE is already an overbanked country given its small population of two million.

Western oilmen clamour for Iraqi crude

BAGHDAD (R) — Western oil executives are holding talks in Iraq to finalise deals that could be activated when sanctions on Iraq are eased or lifted, Iraqi oil sources and diplomats said Monday. "They now want to remain under cover. Deals reached will remain dormant until something is done about the embargo," said one diplomat with close contacts in Iraq's oil industry. Iraq has the world's second biggest proven oil reserves after Saudi Arabia. The United Nations imposed sanctions on Iraq since after it invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

Iraqi forces were driven out of Kuwait in 1991 but the sanctions can be lifted only when the U.N. Security Council is satisfied that Baghdad complied with all Gulf war-related resolutions. The diplomat said the French firm Total was close to reaching an agreement to develop a giant oilfield in southern Iraq with a capacity to produce 400,000 barrels per day (b/d) when sanctions are lifted.

Executives from Total attended an oil conference in Baghdad last week and one of its vice presidents, Christophe de Margerie, said the company planned to invest "several billion dollars" to develop the oilfield when sanctions are lifted. The diplomat said another Total vice president, Alain Lechevalier, stayed behind in Baghdad and was still conducting talks with the Iraqis to finalise the deal. Iraqi sources declined comment when asked about what Mr. Lechevalier was doing in Baghdad and the French oilman himself has not spoken to reporters.

Another French firm, Elf Aquitaine, is linked to talks on the 600,000 b/d Majnoon field, which Iraq says has reserves of 38 billion barrels. Iraqi oil circles are watching closely what Western oil firms would do following an executive order from President Bill Clinton banning U.S. firms from developing oilfields in Iran.

Kuwait strikers say oil quality deteriorates

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwaiti oil workers striking for a third day Monday said crude quality was starting to deteriorate although production volumes remained normal. State-owned Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) denied the allegation, saying oil quality was good despite a walkout that started Saturday aimed at halting the Gulf state's three per cent share of global output. North Sea Brent crude oil prices rose 10 to 15 cents per barrel to a bid level of \$16.73 in Asia on news that talks to try to settle the strike on Sunday had failed, oil traders said. Mohammad Al Shidouni, deputy chairman of the KOC labour union, told Reuters crude oil levels were abnormal because workers needed to operate crucial equipment had walked out. "The strike is starting to take effect. There is a worsening of the oil because of problems in the desalter units," he said. "Production levels remain steady but the salt content is not normal. If they want to solve this problem, they will have to lower production levels," he added. Oilmen who normally work eight hours a day say they have been put on 12-hour shifts to make up for the loss of manpower, and maintenance men are being used to operate production units. The oilmen said operations involving storage tanks had been rearranged because of the strike. Asked to comment on press reports that support for the strike was growing, Mr. Shidouni said 800 people were on strike in the production department and 300 were on strike in the maritime export.

Financial Markets

Jordan Times
In co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close Date 17/3/95	Tel Aviv Close Date 20/3/95
Sterling Pound*	1.5240	1.5100**
Deutsche Mark	1.3867	1.3931
Swiss Franc	1.1505	1.1620**
French Franc	4.9593	4.9825**
Japanese Yen	89.10	89.45
European Currency Unit	1.9275	1.9255**

* USD per STD

** European Opening @ 4.00 a.m. GMT

Eurocurrency Interest Rates

Date: 20/3/1995

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTH	6 MTH	12 MTH
U.S. Dollar	5.87	6.00	6.18	6.50
Sterling Pound	6.00	6.25	6.41	7.50
Deutsche Mark	4.02	4.75	4.87	5.25
Swiss Franc	3.57	3.57	3.68	3.81
French Franc	8.00	8.00	7.87	7.37
Japanese Yen	2.66	1.93	1.93	1.87
European Currency Unit	7.00	7.06	7.06	7.18

Interest Mt rate for annum excluding U.S. Dollars (Lombard & deposits).

Precious Metals

Date: 20/3/1995

Metal	USD/oz	10/Gm	Metal	USD/oz	10/Gm
Gold	382.70	7.70	Silver	4.09	0.110

* 21 Karat

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Date: 20/3/1995

Currency	Buy	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.8270	0.8290
Sterling Pound	1.0852	1.0913
Deutsche Mark	0.4925	0.4950
Swiss Franc	0.5937	0.5967
French Franc	0.1384	0.1391
Japanese Yen*	0.7075	0.7113
Dutch Guilder	0.4389	0.4411
Swedish Krona	0.0000	0.0000
Italian Lira*	0.0394	0.0396

* Per 100

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET				
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHARAFI				
TELEPHONE: 660170 / 663170				
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 20/03/1995				
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE TRADED JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK P.C.	300	56380	188.000	187.500
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	5900	25643	4.370	4.320
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK / NEW	1210	12613	1.250	1.230
KIDDA EAST INVESTMENT BANK	3150	4305	1.390	1.360
THE HOUSING BANK	450	2716	6.020	6.040
JORDAN GULF BANK	11836	14464	1.250	1.200
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	5140	19304	3.760	3.750
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	4898	17558	3.630	3.640
BEIT ISLAMIC SAVINGS/INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	2200	6600	3.000	2.970
ARAB BANK FOR INVESTMENT	111675	173866	1.080	1.070
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	4250	5268	1.250	1.230
BANKS SECTOR				
JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE	13100	32529	2.480	2.470
INSURANCE SECTOR				
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	8340	33013	1.550	1.550
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER / NEW	11500	17020	1.480	1.480
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	3280	16667	5.000	5.000
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS / NEW	3532	17060	4.750	4.850
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINE	13074	15601	2.050	2.050
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO INVESTMENT	3850	7601	2.050	1.950
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	1661	1777	1.100	1.070
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	4500	15288	3.410	3.390
SERVICES SECTOR				
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	14071	42087	2.990	3.000
THE ARAB POTASH/NEW	1750	7942	4.700	4.500
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	381	3507	9.250	9.200
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	200	700	3.500	3.500
THE JORDAN WOODEN KILLS	9412	67190	7.140	7.400
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	14800	59700	4.100	4.030
THE JORDAN PAPER MANUFACTURING	3950	10517	2.700	2.640
SPINNING & WEAVING	1100	2750	2.540	2.500
RAFA INDUSTRIES	21700	58381	2.700	2.700
DAR AL DAMA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	3600	27489	7.680	7.570
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	7600	6389	0.840	0.840
ARAB ALUMINIUM INDUSTRY	2000	12595	6.280	6.280
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	46000	29356	0.640	0.620
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	4200	5848	1.400	1.390
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	200	400	2.000	2.000
JORDAN ROCKETRY INDUSTRIES	2950	3102	1.080	1.030
JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MATCH/JINCO	7550	4950	0.650	0.650
JORDAN SULPHO-CHEMICALS	850	868	1.000	1.330
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	10100	25148	2.500	2.580
UNIVERSAL HOUSE INDUSTRIES	7100	25149	3.540	3.540
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	10350	20316	1.990	1.940
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR				
GRAND TOTAL	377357	831423	INDEX NUMBER: 139.33	CHANGE: -0.47%
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET				
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET				
201441				
110659				

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

Saudi Riyal	0.1888	0.1899
Kuwaiti Dinar	7.3100	7.3600
Qatari Riyal	0.1875	0.1888
Egyptian Pound	0.1900	0.2100
Omani Riyal	1.7500	1.7910
UAE Dirham	0.1666	0.1876
Greek Drachma*	0.2745	0.3850
Cypriot Pound	1.4445	1.5550

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Monday.

U.S. \$1.00 costs	1.4100/10	Canadian dollar
	1.4000/10	Deutschemarks
	1.5702/12	Dutch guilders
	1.1626/36	Swiss francs
	28.90/94	Belgian francs
	4.9865/15	French francs
	1743.6/8.6	Italian lire
	89.49/58	Japanese yen
	7.2950/50	Swedish crowns
	6.2710/60	Norwegian crowns
	5.6291/41	Danish crowns
One sterling	\$1.5790/00	
One ounce of gold	\$382.55/382.95	



Irish celebrate St. Patrick's Day
AMMAN — On the occasion of Ireland's national day, St. Patrick's, the recently formed Irish Ladies of Amman celebrated by organising a dinner ball at the Amman Marriott Hotel Friday evening. The Irish musical group Joe McCarthy's was especially flown to Jordan to perform on this occasion. Attending the function were members of the Irish community in Jordan and their friends.

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Juventus extend lead over Parma Liverpool dent Manchester United's hopes

PARIS (Agencies) — European football's top clubs had a mixed return to the bread and butter of domestic football this weekend.

UEFA Cup semi-finalists Juventus managed to stretch their lead in Italy to five points over Parma, and European Cup semi-finalists Paris Saint Germain beat Nancy to reach the French Cup semi-finals.

And Spanish league leaders Real Madrid stretched their advantage to five points over Barcelona.

But Dortmund, runaway leaders of the Bundesliga at the winter break, crashed to a 3-0 defeat to fellow UEFA Cup semi-finalists Bayer Leverkusen on Saturday as their title campaign headed off the rails.

In Italy, Giancarlo Viali hit his 12th league goal for Juventus this season against nine-man Cremonese as they stretched their lead to five points with a 1-0 win.

Viali, well served by Roberto Baggio, scored in the 69th minute, moments after Enrico Chiesa hit the post for Cremonese. Cremonese were reduced to nine men when Stefano De Agostini and Corrado Verdelli were sent off.

It was a day of celebration for Juventus coach Marcello Lippi, who extended his contract for two seasons just

before the match.

Juventus thanked Reggiana midfielder Igor Simunenkovic for giving them further breathing space after his equaliser in a 2-2 draw against second-placed Parma.

Missimiliano Esposito opened the scoring for Reggiana before Fernando Couto and Lorenzo Minotti hit back to give Parma a 2-1 lead.

Third placed AC Milan, though eight points behind Parma, continued their salvaging of the 1994/95 season with a 3-0 victory at 10-man Sampdoria. Milan, who rested Franco Barresi, were helped by Roberto Mancini's sending off in the 53rd minute.

Earlier in the season, AC Milan were in mid-table, out of the Italian Cup, virtually out of the European Cup, and had been beaten by Velez Sarsfield in the Intercontinental Cup.

Marco Simone, who hit the winner in last Sunday's victory over Padova, scored his eighth goal in four matches after 10 minutes.

Then Demetrio Albertini scored further goals in the 71st and 90 minutes from set pieces — the first from a free-kick and the second from a penalty.

Unbeaten for six months, German leaders Dortmund have now lost twice in two weeks.

Worse still, they would have been knocked off the top of the table had second-placed Werder Bremen not been beaten 2-0 by Borussia Moenchengladbach on Friday night.

Dortmund, who have been dogged by injury and on Thursday lost Swiss goal ace Stephane Chapuisat for the rest of the season, still have 33 points to Bremen's 32.

Paris Saint Germain hosts Marseille and Strasbourg lost Swiss goal ace Metz in the French Cup semi-finals after the four clubs won this weekend.

After topping Johan Cruijff's Barcelona on Wednesday night in the European Champions Cup quarter-finals, Paris Saint Germain, even with key first team members rested, beat Nancy 2-0.

Brazilian defender Ricardo, returning after three weeks out through injury, was the man of the match — heading in both PSG's goals.

Metz beat Mulhouse 2-0 in Saturday's other Cup tie.

Irish international Tony Cascarino and Joel Cantona, brother of Manchester United's Eric, put second division Olympique Marseille into the semi-finals with a 2-0 win over Chateauroux on Friday night.

In Friday's other tie, Bordeaux had three men including their goalkeeper sent off

before finally capitulating 2-0 to Strasbourg in extra time.

In Spain, Real Madrid beat Espanol 1-0 on Sunday to move five points clear of Barcelona, held 0-0 at the Nou Camp stadium by Valencia.

Madrid, without fever victims Michael Laudrup and Fernando Hierro, nevertheless had a tough time in their win.

Chilean Ivan Zamorano scored his 21st goal of the season on the stroke of half-time, and keeper Beto, playing his 500th match in the first division, kept a clean sheet.

Barcelona, without injured Josep Guardiola and Hristo Stoichkov dominated Valencia but were not able to seriously bother former Bar-

celona keeper Andoni Zubizarreta.

And Valencia, coach by former Brazilian boss Carlos Alberto Parreira, had the best chance of the match when Russian Oleg Salenko hit the post in the fifth minute.

Betis Sevilla, promoted this season, took advantage of Deportivo Coruna's 1-0 loss to Atletico Madrid to take third spot on goal difference. Betis beat Campostela 1-0.

Meanwhile Athletic Bilbao coach Javier Irureta resigned on Sunday, 24 hours after his side's 2-0 home defeat against Sevilla.

He will be replaced by second team coach Jose Maria Amorruu.

CSKA chief: Players were poisoned in Greece

MOSCOW (R) — The chairman of CSKA Moscow basketball club said on Monday a mysterious illness that struck down five of his top players just before a key match in Athens was caused by "premeditated poisoning."

Five CSKA players were taken to hospital shortly before last Thursday's European Champion Clubs' Cup quarter-final against Olympiakos after collapsing with spasms and dizziness apparently caused by drinking water.

Olympiakos went on to beat CSKA 79-54 to secure a place in next month's final four competition in Zaragoza, Spain.

"It was a case of premeditated poisoning. It is beyond dispute," CSKA chairman Mikhail Reznikov told Reuters by telephone.

"We are awaiting the official results of the tests due out tomorrow to make a formal statement but for us there is no doubt we were poisoned," Reznikov said.

Reznikov said he himself had a thumping headache after taking just one sip from a bottle of water provided by the organisers.

But he refused to be specific about who might have been behind the incident.

"We do not tend to blame our hosts for it. All bottles were properly sealed and

they themselves have many enemies in Greece as they have friends. It is big money which is the main thing there," he said.

CSKA players Igor Kudachin, Sergei Panov, Igor Monaganov, Evgeny Karashev and Andrei Kornev watched the match on television while recovering in hospital.

Their absence from the game meant CSKA had no substitutes. At one point they fielded only three players when two were fouled out.

A senior Olympiakos official said on Sunday that the club would not comment until the results of blood and urine tests were known. The results were expected Tuesday.

Sampras hurries to win, eager to watch Michael Jordan's return

KEY BISCAINE (Agencies) — Pete Sampras, eager to watch the telecast of Michael Jordan's return to the basketball, hurried past Derrick Rostagno in the second round Sunday at the Lipton Championships.

Stefan Edberg and Richard Krajicek lost their opening matches, leaving just seven of the top 11 men's seeds alive. Todd Martin and Michael Stich lost Saturday.

Sampras, the tournament's two-time defending champion, completed his 6-3, 6-2 victory over Rostagno before 1:15 p.m.

"It feels pretty good," the top-ranked Sampras said. "Because now I'm going to go watch Michael Jordan play."

On a sunny, windy day, the sixth-seeded Krajicek was eliminated 6-3, 3-6, 6-2 by Paul Kilderry, an Australian qualifier ranked No. 194. Edberg, seeded 11th, lost to German Karsten Braasch 6-3, 7-6 (7-1).

"It was just a terrible day

for me," Edberg said. "He is tough to play because he has a very weird game. He takes a lot of pace off the ball and makes it very hard when it is windy out there."

Australian Mark Philippoussis, at 18 the youngest player in the men's draw, advanced by beating Paul Haarhuis 7-6 (7-4), 6-3. All seven Australians in the 96-player men's field remained alive.

"The past few years there have been a lot of questions asked — 'why aren't Australian tennis players producing results like we used to?'" said Kilderry, a 21-year-old Perth native. "Maybe it is starting to turn around."

Mats Wilander, the Lipton champion in 1988, rallied past Karel Novacek 2-6, 7-6 (7-1), 6-3.

On the women's side, No. 9 seed Mary Joe Fernandez pulled out due to influenza prior to her opening match. Fernandez also withdrew from the singles draw at the Delray Beach Winter Championships earlier this month because of flu symptoms and sinusitis.

Fourteenth seed Patrick Rafter continued a string of Aussie successes at the championships when he made a late charge to beat American Jonathan Stark 1-6, 6-4, 7-5.

The 21st-ranked Rafter, a semifinalist here in 1994, joined three Australian underdogs who also scored second-round victories.

Qualifier Paul Kilderry of Australia, ranked 194th, upset sixth-seeded and 10th-ranked Richard Krajicek of the Netherlands 6-3, 3-6, 6-2.

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Sports

Jordan makes dramatic comeback

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — All the competitive fire was there. Only the shooting touch was missing.

In a dramatic return to the game he couldn't stay away from, Michael Jordan showed all the elements that made him great — the double-pump fakes, the mid-air hangs, the explosive dribble, the out-of-nowhere passes — in a tantalizing reminder of what the NBA had missed. He had 19 points, six assists, six rebounds and three steals in 43 minutes in his comeback, a 103-96 Bulls loss to the Indiana Pacers in overtime Sunday.

"I got something to build upon," Jordan said. "If I score 60, it looks boring. I have to build myself up to my caliber of play."

His shooting was rusty, resulting in a 7-for-28 effort. But with two neat jumpers, he kept Chicago close in overtime, tying it 94-94, then pulling Chicago to 97-96 with 1:32 left.

"My timing was a little bit off," he said. "I know it's out going to happen in one game, but hey, I'm back. I'm back for the love of the game."

But Jordan didn't exactly pick up where he left off in his last game, when he led the Chicago Bulls to their third straight NBA title in June of 1993.

For one thing, his shorts were on backward. The NBA logo that supposed to be on the front right leg of the Bulls' shorts was on Jordan's back left leg.

But on the defensive end of the court, it was as though he never left. Assigned to guard Reggie Miller, the league's best shooting guard post-Jordan, Jordan didn't embarrass himself, even though Miller finished with 28 points in a game the Bulls never led.

"He's still got all of his stuff," Miller said. "I'm sure conditioning is going to be a problem for him for a game or two. But once he gets in the rhythm — on my goodness."

Jordan's best play of the game came in the third quarter when he blocked 7-foot-4 Rik Smits from behind, stripping the ball and sprinting up the court for a driving, toe-waggling finger-roll layup. That basket, with 8:55 left in the quarter, cut the Pacers' lead to 50-44, the closest the Bulls got until late in the fourth quarter.

With 19 seconds to play, Scottie Pippen's 3-pointer tied the game 92-92. With three seconds left, Jordan fouled Miller hard and both players went down. After staying down several seconds, Miller limped to the bench with a right thigh contusion.

Jordan stayed down too



Michael Jordan runs onto the court on Sunday retiring from the NBA 17 months ago (AFP photo)

ger, holding his left knee, but was on the court when the game went into overtime. The crowd at Market Square Arena actually booed him.

The Pacers put the game away when Chicago's Luc Longley fouled Byron Scott as he drove to the basket, the ball bounced in and Scott hit the floor, and he converted the free throw for a 102-96 lead with 29.8 seconds left.

Jordan scored Chicago's only points of the extra period.

"It's a miracle with the limited time he had to prepare to play like that," Pacers coach Larry Brown said. "People have to be a little realistic. It's going to take him some time to play at the level people expect him to play at."

There was a crackle of electricity when the Bulls strode onto the court for warm-ups, and the market square arena crowd squealed with delight at Jordan's every programme layup.

But earlier he was as nervous as he's ever been.

"It was tough getting off the plane," he said. "Not getting off the plane I knew the game was beginning."

He had been there before, hearing his name announced as a member of the Bulls starting lineup, but it wasn't quite the same. For one thing, he wasn't wearing No. 23, which hangs from the ceiling of Chicago's United Center after the Bulls retired it last year.

In his second coming, Jordan is No. 45, the same number he wore as a double-a outfielder with the Birmingham Barons.

This was a game with something at stake for the Pacers, who have won six of seven and lead the Central

Division. That much was obvious when, after Jordan's first two shots bounced off the rim, a fan yelled, "go back in Birmingham."

It was hard to say who started off worse, Jordan or the rest of his teammates.

He didn't look nervous, but he still missed his first five shots, including an open shot. Looking like they were meeting each other for the first time, the Bulls missed their first five shots, fell behind 13-2 and were 5-of-19 in the first quarter.

"Quite frankly, every shot felt good. They just didn't fall," Jordan said. "I really wasn't looking to shoot early, because I was trying to get into the flow of the game. I kind of got forced into shooting because of the shot clock winding down."

Finally, Jordan connected on a 18-foot (six metre) jumper from the left wing with 4:04 left before halftime. By then, though, Jordan was breathing hard and bending over with his hands on his knees whenever play stopped.

He seemed to get his second wind in the second half, though, scoring four points in the third quarter while playing nine minutes of the period.

"I started cramping up toward the end," he said.

That he went 1-for-7 in the fourth quarter hardly mattered. Jordan was back in the game.

NBA ROUNDUP

Hornets 108, Jazz 104: In Charlotte, North Carolina, Muggsy Bogues and Hersey

Chris Webber had 23 points and 14 rebounds for the Bulls and Overton scored a career-high 23. Washington is 3-27 when it scores under 100 points.

Down 88-84, the Bulls used two free throws by Calbert Cheaney and a 3-pointer by Chapman to go up 89-88 lead with 1:27 to go. Chapman's basket was Washington's first in nearly four minutes.

The Cavaliers were called for having six players on the court with 46 seconds left, and Chapman made the technical foul shot.

Mark Price scored 16, and Bobby Phills 15 for the Cavaliers, who have lost eight of 11.

Bucks 95, Celtics 94: In Milwaukee, Glenn Robinson scored 28 points and made a 12-footer (3.6-metre shot) from the baseline with 12.7 seconds left, capping a fourth-quarter rally that carried the Bucks past the Celtics.

Boston led 86-76 with just under eight minutes left. Milwaukee outscored the Celtics 15-3 and took the lead at 91-90 on a 3-pointer by Jon Barry with 3:21 to go. Milwaukee went ahead 93-90 after a dunk by Vin Baker but Boston got two free throws from Derek Strong with 2:15 left and a jumper from Dino Raja with 1:40 left for 94-93 lead. Robinson then fought free from a crowd to toss in the winner.

Sherman Douglas had 23 points and 16 assists and Dominique Wilkins had 19 points for the Celtics.

Timberwolves 96, Clippers 93: In Minneapolis, Isiah Rider scored 16 of his 21 points in the fourth quarter, including a tiebreaking 3-pointer with 16 seconds left to win it for Minnesota.

Rider, who has come off the bench the last two games after missing six of the previous eight games, was 1-for-9 before the fourth quarter, but made 7 of his final 9 shots.

Tom Gugliotta had 18 points and Christian Laettner had a season-high 16 rebounds for the Wolves, who have won two straight for just the fourth time this season. Loy Vaught had 21 points and 12 rebounds for the Clippers, who have lost 12 straight road games.

Rockets 114, 76ers 103: In Houston, Hakeem Olajuwon scored 24 points and the



Chicago Bulls' star Michael Jordan makes one of his no-look passes as Indiana's Rik Smits (left) and forward Derrick McKee apply double coverage (AFP photo)

Rockets started an all-university of Houston front line for the first time this season and defeated Philadelphia.

The Rockets got their fifth straight victory with a conga lineup that included Olajuwon, Clyde Drexler and Carl Herrera, who started for the first time since returning from a hamstring injury March 2.

The Rockets held on in the fourth quarter, aided by Vernon Maxwell. He had eight points, including a pair of 3-pointers during the final minutes, and finished with 18 points.

Clarence Weatherspoon led the 76ers with 25 points. Dana Barros, who hit 50 points against the Rockets on Tuesday in a 136-107 loss, scored 24.

RESULTS

Charlotte	108	Utah	104
Indiana	103	Chicago	96, OT
Washington	96	Cleveland	90
Milwaukee	95	Boston	94
Minnesota	96	L.A. Clippers	93
Houston	114	Philadelphia	103
Phoenix	121	Miami	117, OT
Golden State	117	Detroit	115
L.A. Lakers	121	Sacramento	116

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PARMA-REGGIANA: Parma's Colombian players during their Italian Serie A match in Reggio Emilia on Sunday. The match ended in a 2-2 draw as Gianluca Cherubini fight for the ball (see page 10) (AFP photo)

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Russia attacks NATO 'hurry' to expand east

PARIS (Agencies) — Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev on Monday attacked the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) for "hurrying" to expand eastwards as a conference of 52 nations here launched a European stability pact aimed at stifling potential conflict in former communist Eastern Europe.

Mr. Kozyrev told the conference that the moves would create "new lines of division" within Europe and said NATO should not be expanded eastwards "for several years" to allow time for the Western alliance's Partnership for Peace programme to "find solutions" to Europe's security problems.

Opening the conference, French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur called for "a new security relationship with Russia," saying the European Union and NATO should avoid antagonising Moscow.

Mr. Balladur said the European Union (EU) favoured enlargement of the Western European Union (WEU) — the EU's military arm — and of NATO to take in Eastern and Central European countries, but that the process should be "carefully prepared."

He said the aim should be to maintain NATO's effectiveness while avoiding raising "needless antagonisms." The operation has to be accompanied "by a new security relationship with Russia and doubtless, confidence measures," he said.

Mr. Kozyrev spoke after EU foreign ministers, meeting in Carcassonne, south-west France, on Sunday, backed a new security pact between NATO and Russia in return for Moscow's acquiescence to the planned enlargement of the Western military alliance.

The European Stability Pact, agreed here by consensus Monday, recognises the inviolability of existing frontiers and the particular rights of national minorities, problems inherited from the former Austro-Hungarian empire or from the occupation of the Baltic states by the former Soviet Union.

The pact aims to preempt future conflict on the lines of the war in ex-Yugoslavia, which the international community has shown itself powerless to end.

Enshrined in the pact will be a treaty signed here Sunday by Hungary and Slovakia, which is home to 600,000 Hungarians, and about 100 other lesser agreements.

The 52 participants at the two-day Paris conference are the member states of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Signing the pact will be a condition for the admission of Central and Eastern European countries to the EU.

The foreign ministers and government leaders from across the continent had only just approved the pact, when Russia raised one of the most serious security problems facing Europe.

Mr. Kozyrev told the conference that NATO's plans to take in countries such as Poland and Hungary were dangerous and that greater efforts should be made to include all nations in security structures.

"Why rush things if we run the risk of creating new lines of division?" he asked, repeating Moscow's oft-stated fears that it would be left isolated.

"Whatever one may think of NATO, it's still a military alliance which was created when Europe was divided. It should be replaced by a new model based on comprehensive security."

Mr. Kozyrev is due to meet U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in Geneva on Thursday and Russia's troubled relations with NATO are expected to top the agenda.

Moscow refused last December to sign the partnership deal with the alliance because of its opposition to NATO enlargement.

"The gap between NATO's very active moves to studying potential enlargement and its passive attitude in developing this new model of comprehensive security is a very wide one and it could be dangerous," he told the meeting.

Earlier, Mr. Kozyrev joined ministers from the 15-nation EU, Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltic states in approving a series of agreements on borders and the rights of ethnic minorities — some of them already in existence, some new.

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Mr. Kozyrev spoke after EU foreign ministers, meeting in Carcassonne, south-west France, on Sunday, backed a new security pact between NATO and Russia in return for Moscow's acquiescence to the planned enlargement of the Western military alliance.

The European Stability Pact, agreed here by consensus Monday, recognises the inviolability of existing frontiers and the particular rights of national minorities, problems inherited from the former Austro-Hungarian empire or from the occupation of the Baltic states by the former Soviet Union.

The pact aims to preempt future conflict on the lines of the war in ex-Yugoslavia, which the international community has shown itself powerless to end.

Enshrined in the pact will be a treaty signed here Sunday by Hungary and Slovakia, which is home to 600,000 Hungarians, and about 100 other lesser agreements.

The 52 participants at the two-day Paris conference are the member states of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Signing the pact will be a condition for the admission of Central and Eastern European countries to the EU.

The foreign ministers and government leaders from across the continent had only just approved the pact, when Russia raised one of the most serious security problems facing Europe.

Mr. Kozyrev told the conference that NATO's plans to take in countries such as Poland and Hungary were dangerous and that greater efforts should be made to include all nations in security structures.

"Why rush things if we run the risk of creating new lines of division?" he asked, repeating Moscow's oft-stated fears that it would be left isolated.

"Whatever one may think of NATO, it's still a military alliance which was created when Europe was divided. It should be replaced by a new model based on comprehensive security."

Mr. Kozyrev is due to meet U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in Geneva on Thursday and Russia's troubled relations with NATO are expected to top the agenda.

Moscow refused last December to sign the partnership deal with the alliance because of its opposition to NATO enlargement.

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KING MEETS KALMIKIA LEADER: His Majesty King Hussein on Monday received at the Royal Court the president of the Russian autonomous republic of Kalmykia, Ilum Saltanov (Petra photo). The two discussed several regional and international issues. The meeting was attended by Russian Ambassador in Amman Alexander Genov, who was in Jordan on his way home.

Islamists dominate student elections

By Taleb Hiyasat
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Islamic students' faction at the University of Jordan was headed for victory Monday night after less than 10,000 undergraduates voted to elect a one-year student council.

The results this year will not be any different from last year's. The Islamic-dominated council of last year will retain the same formula, according to a poll recently carried out at the university.

Before the elections took place, members of the former council issued a statement in which they accused the university's administration of carrying out "dubious and unacceptable actions" in order to rig the outcome of the elections.

The statement claimed that the administration had searched the students at the university's main gate and carried out full investigation to find out whom they were going to elect.

The statement called on the university students to stand against "such practices and external interferences that aim at changing the elections' outcome."

A large number of students denied that these actions took place and said that there had been no inspection or any unusual practices. Some students questioned the motives behind levelling such charges and said they have no right to issue it under the name of the students council when the council was considered as dissolved.

Two hundred and twenty six candidates from the 13 faculties are competing for council's 80 seats.

Muta elections

Students at the civilian wing of Muta University will Tuesday elect the university's students' federation council.

Some 190 candidates are vying for the council's 67 seats.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Prince Abdullah meets Yemeni minister

ABU DHABI (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein on Monday received in his residence in Abu Dhabi the Yemeni minister of defence who is in the United Arab Emirates to attend an international defence exhibition. Prince Abdullah and the Yemeni official discussed Jordanian-Yemeni relations in various fields. The meeting was attended by His Royal Highness Prince Faisal.

Princess Alia attends Qatar equestrian event

DOHA (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Alia Bint Al Hussein on Monday commended the Qatar equestrian championship festival and praised efforts exerted by the organisers of the event under way in Doha. Princess Alia told a press conference the festival can be considered as an important step aimed at developing the sport in the Arab World. The King's private chamberlain, Prince Ali Ben Nayef, who is also in Doha to attend the festival, said the event was a good chance for horse breeders to meet and establish strong links. Prince Ali said festivals held in Jordan and Qatar help strengthen ties between the two countries and develop the sport.

Vaccination campaign gets ahead

AMMAN (Petra) — A total of 442,247 children under five were vaccinated against polio on Saturday and Sunday, representing 65 per cent of the age group targeted by a national polio immunisation campaign which started Saturday, the Ministry of Health said. It said of the targeted age group, 50 per cent were vaccinated in Amman, 99 per cent in Madaba, 66 per cent in Zarqa, 80 per cent in Balqa, 72 per cent in Irbid, 84 per cent in Ajloun, 85 per cent in Jerash, 82 per cent in Mafrqa, 70 per cent in Karak, 86 per cent in Tafleh, 80 per cent in Maan and 67 per cent in Aqaba. The six-day campaign is organised by the ministry of health in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Alatas receives Jordanian message

JAKARTA (Petra) — Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas on Monday received Jordanian Ambassador to Indonesia Lu'ai Al Khushman, who conveyed to him a message from Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Al Kahariti on bilateral relations and coordinating the two countries' stands within the context of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) on several regional and international issues. Foreign ministers of NAM's member states will meet in Indonesia, which currently chairs the movement, on April 25.

Arabs say no joint chambers with Israel

CAIRO (AP) — Arab chamber of commerce will not set up ties with Israel, the head of the Syrian-based federation said, in a sign that Middle East peace may not usher in greater trade. Israeli officials have hoped that peace with its Arab neighbours would break decades of economic isolation in the region. Foreign Minister Shimon Peres has suggested that Arab chambers of commerce set up joint programmes with Israel to encourage trade. But Burhan Al Dajani, head of the Federation of Arab Chambers of Commerce, said no joint chamber would be set up. The group also will not permit separate Arab chambers to set up joint programmes without the federation's permission. Mr. Dajani told the Arabic newspaper Al Hayat on Monday. The federation groups the chambers of commerce and industry from all Arab countries. Its executive committee met Sunday at the Arab League's headquarters in Cairo. Mr. Dajani, a Palestinian businessman, said the group urged the creation of a development bank for Israel and Arab countries only after treaties were reached with the rest of the Arab World.

Sudan bans lavish receptions

KHARTOUM (AP) — No more gifts of gold or carved wood, imported food or drink. Sudan's once-lavish government receptions will now be austere occasions, apparently to save money. Sudan's leader Omar Hassan Al Bashir on Monday banned expensive receptions for government officials and foreign diplomats, saying they contradicted the policies of his Islamic-oriented government. Gen. Bashir said the receptions would offer cheaper, locally produced foods and drinks. Expensive gifts of gold or carved wood will be prohibited. Lavish government receptions are traditional in many Arab and African countries. Sudan is Africa's largest country, but one of the poorest in the world.

Egypt's liberal party team meets Iraqis

BAGHDAD (R) — A delegation from Egypt's small Liberal Party is in Baghdad exploring ways to bring Iraq back to the Arab fold, a senior party official said on Monday. "We are here for Arab reconciliation," Hulmi Ahmad Salim, a senior party official, told Reuters. He said the party's head, Mustafa Kamel Murad, met senior Iraqi officials and was told that Baghdad was ready to "open a new chapter" in its relations with Arab states. The Liberal Party delegation arrived in Baghdad on Sunday. Mr. Salim said the party was against the "unjust embargo" imposed on Iraq for invading Kuwait in 1990. "The steadfastness of the Iraqi leadership and its patience under sanctions are the subject of world's admiration," the government daily Al Jumhuriya quoted Mr. Murad as saying.

Qatar to store U.S. equipment — Perry

KUWAIT CITY (Agencies) — The United States has for the first time received permission to base military equipment in Qatar in a bid to defend Gulf states against Iran and Iraq, U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry said Monday.

Qatar has allowed Washington to deploy enough equipment for a brigade, which numbers around 4,000 troops. Mr. Perry told a news conference during a visit to Kuwait which was freed from Iraqi occupation in the 1991 U.S.-led Gulf war.

The equipment will complement the increase in U.S. material sent to Kuwait since last October when Iraq massed troops along the border of the emirate in what many feared would be a repeat of the 1990 invasion.

"Last October we had half of a brigade" worth of equipment in Kuwait, said Mr. Perry who visited U.S. troops during the crisis. "Now we have a full brigade. In addition to that we have authorisation to move our second brigade in Qatar."

Mr. Perry, who arrived here from Saudi Arabia where he began a Gulf tour, said "I will discuss the arrival of the brigade" when he goes to Qatar.

"Iraq represents an immediate threat. We consider Iran as a potential future threat," he said.

The Iraqis "have been rebuilding their defence industrial capabilities," he told a news conference at an air base here. "Since last October they showed some indications of not having learned a very effective lesson."

Washington hoped to maintain its armada of warships in the Gulf and Red Sea as well as warplanes at bases in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, he said.

"We have important long-term security interests and we will work with the Saudis and Kuwaitis and other governments in the region to provide security and stability," he said.

"The sanctions against Iraq are effective 70 to 80 per cent which is pretty good. They have chosen to rebuild their forces" at their own people's expense, he said.

He said Washington will continue to back maintaining U.N. sanctions until Iraq complies with all U.N. resolutions ending the Gulf war, including divulging details on weapons suppliers and returning Kuwaiti prisoners and property.

Mr. Perry said in Riyadh earlier that Iran posed a threat to Gulf Arab countries and that its weapons deployment in the region went beyond its defensive needs.

He said Iran was reinforcing military positions at the mouth of the Gulf across from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) by building up its forces on several islands.

Iran is locked in a dispute with the UAE over sovereignty of three islands near the Strait of Hormuz at the entrance to the Gulf, the transit point for a fifth of the world's oil.

The United States charged last month that Iran had deployed anti-aircraft missiles on the islands.

Tehran retorted by stressing its defence concerns against possible Israeli threats and defending its right to carry out "routine" military exercises on its own territory.

Meanwhile foreign ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates — urged Iraq to comply in full with the U.N. resolutions.

But they sidestepped Qatar and Oman calls to ease sanctions for humanitarian reasons.

The foreign ministers declared in a joint communique issued after a two-day policy coordination conference that Iraq "complete implementation of resolutions of international legitimacy... and desist from any aggressive or provocative deeds" in line with U.N. Security Council Resolution 949.

The ministers specifically stressed that Iraq must release some 600 Kuwaitis and restore property taken from the emirate.

They expressed appreciation for the Security Council's insistence that Iraq meet all the conditions laid down

COLUMN

5 members of pop group Smoke critical after road smash

GUMMERSBACH, Germany (AFP) — The five members of the British pop group Smoke, which had a string of hit records in the 1970s, were critically injured Sunday in a road accident, police said. The group's small bus rolled down an embankment after being caught in a hailstorm near this western town. One member of the group, Alan Lesley Barton, was flown to hospital in Cologne by helicopter, while his four colleagues were hospitalised in Gummertsbach. The group, whose top-selling singles included Living Near Door To Alice and Lay Back In The Arms Of Someone, was en route to Düsseldorf Airport to catch a flight to Britain after giving a concert in Lennestadt, west of Cologne.

The accident occurred on a narrow road near the town of Gummertsbach, where the group was performing a concert. The bus, which was carrying the five members of the group, lost control and rolled down a steep embankment.

Alan Lesley Barton, 35, was the only member of the group to escape serious injury. He was flown to hospital in Cologne by helicopter. The other four members of the group were injured and taken to local hospitals.

The group, which was formed in 1970, had a string of hit records in the 1970s. Their most successful single, "Living Near Door To Alice", reached number one in the UK charts.

8,600 elephants to be sold or shot

HARARE (AFP) — A total of 8,600 elephants will be sold or shot in Zimbabwe this year, the Department of National Parks and Wildlife announced Monday. The action, which is bound to stir controversy among international conservation groups, is being taken to protect the environment in overcrowded game reserves, the department said. In an advertisement calling for tenders, the department said it would prefer the animals to be captured and translocated to farming areas within Zimbabwe or to other countries in southern Africa. "However, proposals will also be considered for culling operations or a combination of both capture and culling," the advertisement said.

The department said it was receiving a large number of tenders for the culling of elephants. It said it was considering the proposals and would announce the results in the near future.

The culling of elephants has been a controversial issue in Zimbabwe for many years. Conservation groups have argued that elephants are an important part of the country's natural heritage and should be protected.

The department said it was taking the decision to cull elephants in order to protect the environment in overcrowded game reserves. It said that the culling was necessary to prevent the reserves from becoming overgrazed and to protect the health of the remaining elephants.

The department said it was also considering the possibility of translocating elephants to other parts of the country. It said that this would allow the elephants to live in a more natural environment and would also help to protect the environment in the reserves.

Movie world celebrates 100th anniversary

LYON, France (R) — The movie world Sunday celebrated the 100th anniversary of the filming of the first flickering image when directors jokingly imitated the historic scene of French workers leaving a factory. Huge white curtains were drawn aside to let several dozen film directors walk out of a ruined building which used to be the factory where Frenchmen Louis and August Lumiere first set up their wooden cinematograph camera on March 19, 1895. Directors including John Boorman, Stephen Frears and Andrei Konchalovsky were among thousands of people at the ceremony in Lyon, central France. A hundred years ago, the primitive black and white camera captured workers "emerging into bright spring sunshine at the end of a shift, some pushing bicycles, most of them wearing hats. The Lumiere brothers, who initially rated their invention as a "scientific curiosity with no commercial possibilities," helped to spawn a new art form and a billion-dollar industry. The landmark footage became part of the world's first film, shown to paying audiences in Paris in December 1895. Other sequences in the film, comprising 10 50-second clips, included shots of the Lumiere children having lunch, a Lumiere child playing a prank on a gardener and a horse dragging a truck in Lyon. The French government and the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) are organising a worldwide extravaganza to mark the 1995 centenary.

The 100th anniversary of the invention of the cinematograph camera is being celebrated in Lyon, France, where the Lumiere brothers first set up their camera. The event is being organised by the French government and UNESCO.

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Gore backs nuke-free Mideast, but will not pressure Israel

CAIRO (Agencies) — Skirting a dispute with Egypt, U.S. Vice-President Al Gore on Monday endorsed the idea of banning nuclear weapons in the Middle East but refused to pressure Israel to give up its suspected arsenal.

Mr. Gore held 2½ hours of talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who is leading an Arab campaign demanding that Israel allow international inspection of its weapons and sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The United States is pushing for an indefinite extension of the 25-year-old treaty but Egypt and some other developing nations are threatening not to sign unless Israel does.

"We support universal adherence to the treaty and we believe it should be extended indefinitely and unconditionally," Mr. Gore said at an outdoor news conference with Mr. Mubarak at the Ithadiya palace.

"We do not believe that (the treaty) extension should be linked to whether other states join the treaty or to a specific timeframe for achieving our broadly supported non-proliferation goals in the Middle East," he said.

Cairo is the first stop on a five-country trip that also will take Mr. Gore to Jordan, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Israel. He will also meet in Jericho with Pales-

tine Liberation Organisation chief Yasser Arafat. Israel has never admitted that it possesses nuclear weapons but it is believed to have 200 warheads. It has resisted demands for opening its facilities to inspection, arguing it must keep up its guard against potential adversaries Iran, Iraq and Libya.

Mr. Gore said Egypt and Israel are having "a new constructive dialogue" over their concerns about weapons of mass destruction.

The Egyptian government daily Al Akhbar charged Monday that the United States "has simply sided with Israel" against Egypt in the nuclear row.

"But things don't stop there, because we have also been surprised by intense American pressure to force Egypt to abandon its position," it added in an editorial by its editor-in-chief, Galal Dawidar.

Mr. Dawidar said pressure was exerted by U.S. officials on their Egyptian counterparts and through an American press campaign against Egypt.

President Mubarak, quoted by Monday's press, told a legal committee monitoring the row that "Egypt will not bow to any sort of pressure."

Meanwhile, the six Gulf Arab states urged Israel Monday to join the NPT after a two-day meeting of their foreign ministers in Saudi Arabia.

The Gulf Cooperation

Council, grouping Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, said in a statement that "a fair and comprehensive peace will never be secured in the region without security and balance (of forces) being guaranteed."

Mr. Gore and Mr. Mubarak spoke hopefully about the potential for progress in peace talks and condemned Sunday night's attack that killed two Israelis in the West Bank city of Hebron.

"This attack emphasises that the survival of the peace process hinges directly on the determination of the parties to live up to their prospective responsibilities," Mr. Gore said.

"We agreed that it has stiffened the resolve of the United States and Egypt to do all we can to help bring the peace process to a successful conclusion."

Mr. Mubarak agreed. "We are determined to continue to work together in order to enhance the changes for achieving meaningful progress on the road to peace," he said.

"We are fighting the forces of despair, extremism and violence."

Mr. Gore's trip began a campaign that gives him a special role in U.S. relations with Egypt, with him and Mr. Mubarak serving as leaders of a committee to foster economic and scientific cooperation (see inside).

The Gulf Cooperation

Jordanians split over contacts with Israelis

By Rana Sahbagh
Reuters

AMMAN — More than four months after Jordan ended its 46-year struggle with Israel, its citizens remain deeply divided over how much contact they want with people they had been taught to vilify.

Many intellectuals, opposition politicians and ordinary Jordanians are battling to keep the Oct. 26 treaty a piece of paper rather than the route to full political, economic and cultural links.

"The state can do what it wants," said Kamal Nasser, head of Jordan's influential Bar Association. "But it cannot interfere in people's feelings, force them to change attitudes and convince them Israel is a friendly state while it continues to occupy Arab lands and harm Palestinians."

"People simply do not want to deal with Israel... no law will force them to do so," he told Reuters, re-

flecting the view of that section of society which believes peace with the "Zionist enemy" is far-fetched.

His group is among 12 professional associations which have threatened to dismiss any of their 80,000 members who have contacts with Israelis.

The Jordanian Writers' Association is considering expelling 10 members, including two cabinet ministers, for "normalisation activities."